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THE NEW REPUBLIC

June 10, 1978

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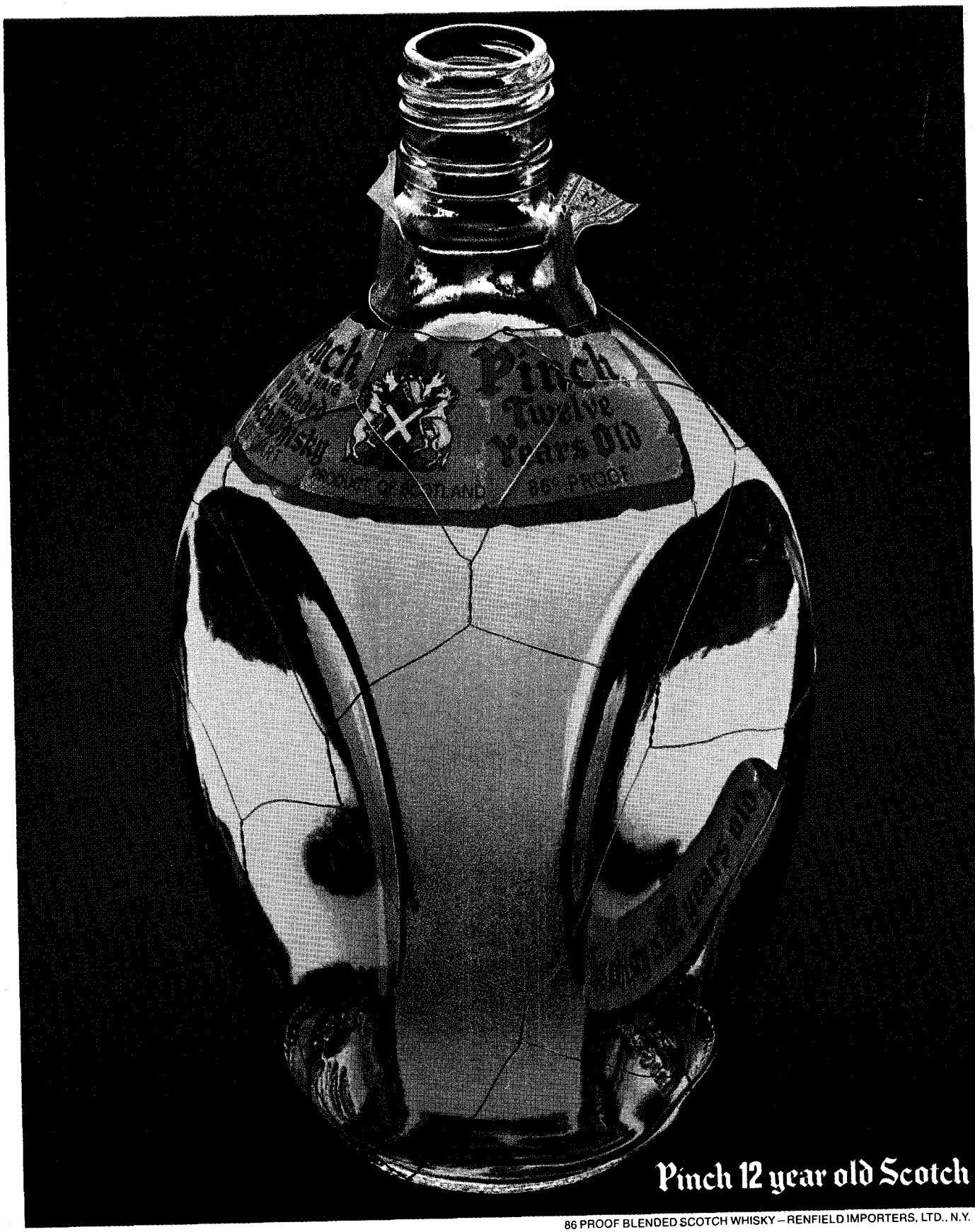

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TRB

from Washington
June 10, 1978

Witch Trial

How can a man like Orlov do what he does? What produces men like Yuri Orlov? Maybe we have a spark of divinity in us after all! Orlov, 53, is the Russian physicist, married—a position in society—who became chairman of a group that undertook to monitor how the Soviets obeyed their promise to support freedom of speech and action of citizens. The mutual promises were exchanged at Helsinki three years ago with 34 other governmental leaders from Europe and North America. Brezhnev signed the agreements and, at Belgrade, only three months ago, his government renewed the pledges, declaring that their fulfillment was "essential" to East-West detente.

Nobody really believed Moscow would carry out its pledges but many hoped there would be some signs of a change of attitude. There were none, and the Russian government turned on its own citizens who pointed this out. Orlov must have known what he faced. I suppose he thought the sacrifice worthwhile. What's a life for, he may have asked? He was brought to trial. Half a hundred of his supporters bravely assembled outside the court where the witch trial was held, and the controversy caused enough stir so that even *Pravda* had to take notice of it. Result: after keeping Orlov incommunicado for 15 months before the trial, the judge sentenced him to seven years in jail and five years of banishment. So that ended it; Orlov accomplished nothing . . . except to make you and me, and people around the world (including some Russians) lift our heads a little at the thought that life still produces people like that; yes, that there will nearly always be an Orlov waiting if the crisis and human dignity demand it.

"I have reluctantly concluded that I should postpone my visit to the Soviet Union," HEW Secretary Califano said last week. "I believe that my visit would be mutually beneficial at another time." He had been invited to come by the Soviet Minister of Health, Petrovsky, to oversee agreements for collaborative research in which Moscow is deeply interested. He decided not to go after consulting Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, whose department called Orlov's conviction a "gross distortion of internationally accepted standards of human rights." A delegation of scientists sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences has canceled plans for a similar trip, too.

Every Western scientist or other professional person now faces the question, says the London *Economist*, "Should I ignore the prosecution of the bravest of my Soviet colleagues, or should I help to end it by suspending all professional contact until their government stops flouting its Helsinki promises?"

The incident comes at a moment of extraordinary tension in East-West relations, the first real test of Jimmy Carter in foreign affairs. Anyone who lived in this city in the time of Joe McCarthy would hate to see that noxious atmosphere of hate and fear revived; the president could precipitate a confrontation in a minute if he so desired. Maybe it will come anyway. Anti-Communism (rational or hysterical) is the one sure political emotion that will rouse America. And at this juncture it would not feed on anything so remote and transcendental as Orlov, but on the practical defense anxieties discussed here by NATO leaders last week, and by actual grievances cited in an extraordinarily provocative TV recapitulation by Carter's national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, just back from China. President Carter took a tough line on his trip to Spokane; Vice President Mondale followed it up—before the United Nations disarmament conference in New York; then came Zbig. Russia has overstepped the "code of detente," Brzezinski said; it has employed 40,000 Cuban troops in Africa; it should be made to feel that such adventurism ought not "to be cost free." Zbig wants Russia punished. It's hard not to grit your teeth, too, after thinking of Orlov.

The irony is that the US and USSR are within touching distance of an agreement on SALT that could just conceivably slow down the suicidal arms race. There are two witnesses to this approach. Brzezinski himself says, "We are close, very close," although, as he adds at once, "in some ways quite far away. That is to say, it is within grasp if reason prevails."

And German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in another TV interview last week corroborated this. He is the latest Western statesman to see Brezhnev in person, at a recent visit to the Federal Republic: "He is nearing the end of his political career. I have no doubt that he wants deeply to save his country from the dangers of future war," Schmidt says. It is clear to him that Brezhnev wants to meet President Carter; Schmidt thinks Carter wants to see Brezhnev, too. They will meet almost certainly if there is a breakthrough on SALT which they would announce jointly.

NATO leaders found one puzzle in Washington that they asked about off-the-record. How is it possible that five years after the Arab oil embargo neither President Nixon, President Ford nor President Carter was able to get a practical energy program enacted; it seems incredible to them that the Congress of the most profligate oil-using nation in the world can't get the Carter energy bill through a year after he offered it. This question of American irresponsibility seemed to bother everyone.

Helmut Schmidt was frank, coming to the support of the man whose leadership qualities he reportedly questioned in Europe (perhaps he sees the problems more clearly in Washington): Congress should "positively" pass the Carter energy program, he said. He is still worried about a global recession precipitated by a falling dollar in a continuing horrendous US trade deficit. The energy bill, he adds, is "the most important single instrument" to prevent this and restore exchange equilibrium. (An odd thing, you say to yourself, for the head of one nation to say about a pending controversial bill in another country; but nobody seems to disagree about the need for a bill anymore.)

To whom is Jimmy Carter listening? To promote diplomatic triangulation with China, hawkish Brzezinski spent three days in Peking, where a remarkable degree of frankness developed. Secretary Vance occupies a middle place. UN Ambassador Andrew Young warns against new big-power colonialism in Africa. "If I were putting together an African policy cocktail for the United States," said one senior European diplomat relaxing at a party, "I would throw in a big shot of Andy Young, a big shot of Cyrus Vance, and just a little Brzezinski pepper."

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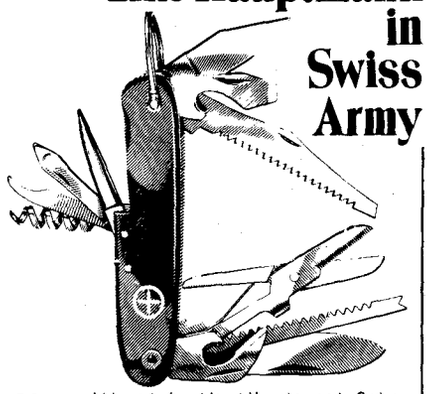
Like Hauptmann in Swiss Army



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

June 10, 1978

A Lingering Death

The great gas compromise, consummated with a fanfare on May 24, may prove to be one of the lesser achievements of the 95th Congress. Though it was not a compromise at all, but rather a defeat for the buyers of natural gas, it is being celebrated as a happy solution to the struggle between consumers and producers that has held the energy bill in stalemate for more than a year. It was also a defeat for the federal government, in that it set a date certain for the government to surrender its power to control the price of natural gas. In the future, if this compromise is enacted, that power will rest exclusively with the gas companies.

After the authors of the energy bill voted their approval of the compromise in separate House and Senate conferences, there was a lot of back-slapping and posing for cameras. They had finished work on the fourth of five sections of the president's energy plan, and they saw that it was good. The president himself said a few kind words about the conferees and their "historic agreement." The big national papers saluted it in their editorial columns. Then the congressmen left town for a week of Memorial Day rest, recuperation and constituent visits. The celebrations may have been premature, however, for this compromise is not likely to be as popular in the rest of the country as it was on Capitol Hill.

The reason is that the bargain seems lopsided, conceding much more to the gas companies than to the organized consumer lobbies. Here's what the deal proposes to do, in simple form. The gas companies would get two big benefits, one today and the second in 1985. The immediate reward would be an increase in the allowable maximum price of gas from about $1.50 to $1.93 per thousand cubic feet, starting when the bill is enacted. Each year afterward the maximum would go up a step until it reached about $3.70 per thousand cubic feet in 1985. Then the second benefit would come due: the federal government would turn the companies loose and let them set prices however they wish. In return for all this, the gas producers have given two concessions to the other side. First they have agreed to let the government regulate the price of gas produced and sold within a state. In the past, the government has claimed jurisdiction only over interstate gas sales. This expansion of federal pricing authority is a matter more of symbol than of substance, because the new federal price ceiling will be so high that it will hardly make any difference to in-state prices. What it *will* do is force some of the gas sold locally into the national market. National prices in the future will be at least as high as local prices are now, and the interstate pipelines will snatch up all the available gas. This means that consumers in Louisiana and Texas may have more trouble getting gas supplies than they have had in the past. This change won't affect the gas companies. The second concession made by the companies has to do with timing. They have agreed to take their cake in little slices rather than all at once. The Senate proposed to end all federal price controls in a quick two-year transition. The House wanted to keep controls. Now, according to the May 24 compromise, the transition to no controls will take seven years.

It's difficult to see what the deal offers consumers. The stretched-out schedule of price increases allegedly will make the shock more tolerable than it would have been if controls were lifted immediately. The companies will be kept in check until 1985, it's said, and that is supposed to be good news. But is it?

This compromise permits the gas producers to raise their prices between now and 1985 at a rate considerably faster than the rate of inflation—amounting to about 10 percent a year. If general inflation moves faster than the econometricians have predicted, the rate of price increases could be correspondingly faster. This formula hardly puts the industry in fetters. Quite the opposite. It seems to provide a cozy federal shelter for price increases the companies would like to make in any case. Brer Rabbit has been thrown into the briar patch.

If the companies were given complete freedom to set

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their own prices, it is conceivable that they would raise them by more than 10 percent a year for the next seven years. But the political risk for them in this case would be much greater, for they would not be able to share any of the blame for their inflationary action with the federal government. The burden would be all on them. Some companies would be bolder than others, but none would be able to say that their price increases were sanctioned by the government. As the compromise plan reads now, Congress is prepared to authorize in advance price increases of 10 percent a year through 1985. At the end of this period, when the worst of the political storm has passed, the companies will cast off the cloak of federal regulation and emerge into the springtime of something they like to call the free market.

One of the odd features of this program is that it postpones the coming of the free market for seven years. The president and the congressmen who support this delay do so presumably because they think that a little federal control of prices is better than none at all. They imagine that the surrender of federal authority will somehow be made more palatable if it is done in little steps. They are probably wrong, for the compromise they are about to join incorporates many of the bad elements of federal regulation, but few of the benefits. One drawback, mentioned above, is that the government has agreed to share responsibility for future price increases, even though staff economic studies by the Federal Power Commission have shown that the companies have no compelling justification for increased prices. A second drawback is that federal regulators, though emasculated on pricing policy, would still be on the scene to make life difficult for small or inexperienced gas drillers who do not know their way around the Federal Power Commission. A third drawback is that by promising in advance to set prices higher every year, the government is creating an incentive to withhold gas from the market. A gas producer will know that for every year he waits before offering his gas for sale—up until 1985—he will get a higher price for it. The primary justification for ending federal controls is that speculative withholding of this kind would stop. But if Congress mandates a seven-year waiting period for decontrol with guaranteed increases every year, there will be no speculation involved at all in holding gas off the market.

The president may have decided that he cannot get an energy bill through to Congress without buying off the gas industry. If so, he may as well be straightforward about it. The direct approach will serve him better in the long run. He should let the companies set prices as they want—if that is what they demand—and he should let them do it immediately. Then he should stand back and let the companies try to explain to the mobs of consumers why life is happier without federal price controls.

The Last Drop

Here is some very good news dredged from deep within a recent *Wall Street Journal*. Three of the largest US coffee companies have stopped buying beans from Uganda. The House International Relations Committee has recommended a trade embargo against Uganda because of what the *Journal* calls "alleged human rights violations," but the committee refuses to propose binding legislation.

As we pointed out last month ("Another Cup of Coffee," *TNR*, May 13), a boycott of Ugandan coffee by individual consumers would be next to impossible. Uganda accounts for only four percent of our coffee imports, and Ugandan beans are mixed with others, unidentified, in many brands of coffee. On the other hand, Uganda is a perfect target for an organized boycott, since its economy is so fragile and since Idi Amin's government depends directly on money from coffee exports (little of which trickles down to benefit the country's impoverished and oppressed citizens).

The Folger Coffee Company and General Foods Corporation, maker of Maxwell House, previously were the two biggest importers of Ugandan coffee. Now both have stopped buying Ugandan beans. So has the American division of the Swiss Nestlé conglomerate. We congratulate these companies.

Making a stand in quicksand.

The Mobutu Rescue

Kinshasa

There are many ways to enter Zaire. One of the more colorful is by ferry from Congo-Brazzaville. It costs about $2.50 and is well worth it. The ferry leaves Brazzaville amidst calm and order with tight control over travel documents. The entry into the Kinshasa port is another matter altogether.

At Brazzaville, the ferry fills up with Zairian women who appear portly because they have wrapped endless pieces of cloth about their middle, to smuggle them into Zaire where they fetch prices infinitely higher than in Brazzaville. Men who scurry aboard the ferry carry bags stuffed with cloth and other items which are resold in Kinshasa at inflated prices. The bags are marked, "rice given to the people of Zaire as a present from the United States." A few moments before landing, there is an incredible flurry of activity aboard as the smuggled items are heaved over the sides to colleagues waiting ashore.

The arrival at Kinshasa, Zaire's capital, is an immediate introduction to Zaire's immense problems.

(continued on page 8)

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Correspondence

Weatherpersons

To the editors:

The relevance—indeed the importance—of political semantics is amply illustrated by Nathan Lewin's "Swapping Indictments" (*TNR*, May 6, 1978). Lewin refers to a group known as the "Weatherman Organization." While this may be the FBI's term for people like Bernardine Dohrn, Jeff Jones, etc., *TNR* can usually be relied upon for greater accuracy. The correct name of the group is the "Weather Underground Organization." They changed their name years ago, feeling "Weatherman" was sexist and therefore confining.

Mr. Lewin also calls them "fugitives." Perhaps they are in some sense; yet their extralegal status is voluntary, and not imposed on them. Dohrn remarks "It is our job to build an underground . . . an underground is necessary for a revolution . . . we are not simply running away." Indeed, fugitives flee, and the WUO is not fleeing; they remain in the country as a perennial thorn in the FBI's skin, rather than running away.

Paul Pigulski
Jacksonville, Illinois

Krupp's clemency

To the editors:

In the "Diarist" of April 29, Martin Peretz recalls but two of John J. McCloy's callous acts toward the Jewish people. In my opinion, McCloy's most arrogant and contemptuous deed occurred during his tenure as United States High Commissioner of Occupied Germany. In freeing Alfried Krupp from prison, and overturning his Nuremberg conviction as a war criminal, McCloy thumbed his nose at the thousands of Jews (and gentiles) who lived and died as slaves in the Krupp factories.

McCloy also turned his back on ". . . General Taylor, General Clay, and the tribunal. . . . [and] his Clemency Board . . . made a travesty of years of interrogation and painstaking documentation . . .", to quote from *The Arms of Krupp* by William Manchester.

In all of McCloy's actions, we see the type of political expediency that led to the Holocaust. God save the Jews and the gentiles from such chairmen of the American Establishment.

Stan Perry
Cleveland, Tennessee

Life imitating art

To the editors:

Once again, reality imitates art ("The Man Behind the Cardigan," *TNR*, May 20).

No sooner does *TNR* give us Garry Trudeau's interview with Duane P. Delacourt, President Carter's fictional Secretary of Symbolism, than the White House announces the appointment of Gerald Rafshoon to serve as a real life presidential assistant in charge of image.

Many thanks to your magazine, and to Mr. Trudeau for giving us the news, and for telling us about some of it before it even happens.

Dennis Schain
Manchester, Connecticut

. . . And for the defense . . .

To the editors:

In the article entitled "The Trouble with Lawyers" (*TNR*, May 20), the writer refers to the legal profession as an "essentially fruitless activity." It is astounding that a periodical with the high intellectual standards of *The New Republic* should publish such a flippant and puerile opinion. Countless individuals, unjustly accused of crimes, have been acquitted of charges only because of the skillful and persevering efforts of their attorneys. Numberless men and women who have been defrauded have had their property restored as a result of the intelligence and resourcefulness of the legal community. The civil rights movement would have been stalled in its tracks if lawyers had not contributed their learning and energy. Poor and rich, black and white, have appealed to lawyers when faced with complex and seemingly insurmountable problems, and lawyers have responded, easing tensions, restoring hope, and giving new direction to broken and despairing human beings. There are thousands, possibly millions, who can testify to this.

Benjamin Housman
Bronx, New York

To the editors:

This morning a lady came to my office with this problem. On April 1, 1977, her mother had signed a lease with a nursing home for one year for $550 per month and had put up a $150 deposit as security for costs. The lease provided for a 30 day written notice or else it would automatically be renewed for an additional year. This lady's mother notified the management on February 2, 1978, that she intended to move and would not renew the lease. The manager acknowledged this statement of non-renewal and told her that it would not be necessary to give the 30 day written notice required by the lease. This action has been corroborated by the nursing home accountant. On March 15, 1978, the lady actually moved from her apartment. She had previously paid the rent for March so that she was paid up and through the full term of the lease.

About May 1, 1978, the lady received a notice from the nursing home claiming that she owed the nursing home approximately $110 for various items which were not listed. The lady turned the matter over to her daughter, my client, who had explained the above in my office. My client also stated that she had made some investigation and that this particular nursing home seemed to follow a practice of not only refusing to refund cost deposits to its elderly tenants, but also making small additional claims which it coerced them into paying.

I have agreed to accept this case and I trust that I not only can recover the elderly lady's (over eighty) cost deposit and release her from the claim for the $110, but I also hope to bring enough pressure on this particular nursing home to have them cease this kind of practice forever in the future.

Is this the "essentially fruitless activity" which your article on "The Trouble with Lawyers" states that lawyers engage in? If so, your magazine has a pretty poor idea of what life is all about.

Timothy E. Kelley
Dallas, Texas

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People push and press in all directions, and Zairian port police beat them back. Outside the port, police shake down hapless Kinshasa pedestrians. Zairians tell you that many of the police are not paid enough to get by. It is everyone for himself in Zaire's dilapidated capital.

Within a short time, it becomes obvious that the impressive Kinshasa skyline as seen from the Brazzaville side of the river is a facade. Kinshasa's streets are littered with uncollected garbage, and few city services function well, if at all. Zaire's economy is in a shambles, sapped by gross mismanagement. Corruption extends to the highest reaches of government. This has been disastrous for the general population whose fortunes have declined since the Congo became Zaire in October 1971. The new name was intended as a symbolic act of national self-assertion over the local economy. The new authenticity was intended to serve as a galvanizing social and political credo. At the same time, President Mobutu embarked upon a more assertive foreign policy.

The great push by President Mobutu floundered because of corruption and nepotism, coupled with a sharp decline in world copper prices in 1974. The copper exports from Shaba province (formerly Katanga) earned 65 percent of Zaire's foreign exchange. Zaire, saddled with major foreign debts, has been in a state of continuous crisis.

The average Kinshasa family of five can barely care for or feed itself on its monthly income. A sack of cassava, the basic diet staple, costs twice the minimum legal monthly wage of 20 Zaires ($23). Yet the average family requires two bags a month. Prices for essential foodstuffs and goods are exorbitant throughout the country. There are reports from eastern Zaire that schoolchildren have collapsed in their classroom because they cannot get enough to eat.

The dismal economic picture accompanies a deteriorating political situation. In 1965, President Mobutu assumed power and brought calm to the then turbulent Republic of the Congo. He worked to establish a sense of nationhood among the country's disparate regions and ethnic groups. But President Mobutu's political ability has shown itself to have limits. He has proved ineffectual at organizing and consolidating his early political successes. Where once President Mobutu was a unifying factor, his actions have now become a source of disunity. In particular Zairians accuse him, and his close relatives, of nepotism, accumulating personal wealth and discriminating against Zairians from regions other than their native Equateur province.

In May 1977, civil war erupted in southern Zaire. It was quickly joined by exiles who had fled the country during the 1960s, whose native Shaba province has provided Zaire with most of its wealth. They had never accepted President Mobutu's legitimacy. In spring 1977, the desperate economic situation offered these opponents an opportunity to topple the Mobutu regime, which had become very unpopular. Mobutu's army failed to offer significant resistance, but Mobutu was saved by an eleventh-hour Franco-Moroccan military intervention.

Since the 80-day Shaba war in 1977, President Mobutu has spoken of reforms and made gestures in that direction. But at the same time, he has drawn closer to his family and co-regionalists. Zaire's rabble army has plundered the Shaba countryside. The political and economic crisis remained and deepened. Units of Zaire's armed forces committed abuses and atrocities in the Idiofa region of Bandundu province, southeast of Kinshasa, in January 1978. In mid-February, President Mobutu denounced a military plot of officers from southern Zaire's Shaba province, the two Kasais, and southern Bandundu province. Thirteen officers were executed for allegedly masterminding the military plot, which some Zairians claim never existed. They were executed despite clemency pleas from the United States and other Western powers. This was followed by a purge of 700 officers, almost all from southern regions.

Zaire is a dilemma for the United States. On the one hand, President Mobutu shows himself increasingly unable to act competently. But American officials are even more apprehensive about what might happen were President Mobutu to disappear from the scene. In addition, the United States is under increasing pressure from Western governments to stand up to Soviet and Cuban intervention in Africa.

The official American attitude toward President Mobutu is a bit reminiscent of the sentiments once expressed about the old South Vietnamese government—that however corrupt and incompetent, they were our SOBs and we had to support them. The Western powers have chosen Mobutu's Zaire as the place to take a stand against the Russians and the Cubans, but they may discover they are taking a stand on quicksand.

Lewis LeDroit

Lewis LeDroit is an American teaching in Africa.

Hawkishness is the latest fashion in Paris.

The New French Line

France—formerly the least enthusiastic member of the Western alliance—is now determined to play an activist role in blocking Soviet inroads everywhere. This change of heart may be one of the most significant events in world politics today. In fact, the French are turning into the United States' most assertive European ally. This is a remarkable departure from the

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quasi-neutralist policies pursued in Paris since the days of General de Gaulle.

To be sure, France remains outside the military structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But her recent military and political actions in Africa and elsewhere are more important to the US than a formal French return to the NATO command.

And, in a sense, France has already done more than most NATO allies to turn the attention of the alliance to the dangers posed by the Soviets and the Cubans in the present African turmoil. Strictly speaking, NATO responsibilities are confined to Europe, but mounting crises in Africa are increasingly affecting Western interests there, a part of the world that has always been of major concern to the French.

The most dramatic example of the new French attitude was the dispatch of Foreign Legion paratroopers to southern Zaire last month to smash the rebel invasion from Angola. The operation was ostensibly intended to rescue whites trapped in Zaire's Shaba province. But the French clearly were just as interested in protecting the integrity of Zaire.

Last year, the French flew Moroccan troops to help Zaire beat back a previous rebel incursion; this time they took matters into their own hands. France's new African offensive also includes military backing for Chad against Libya-based guerrillas and help to Morocco and Mauritania in opposing Algerian-supported Polisario Front activities in the former Spanish Sahara.

And the French want to go even further. President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing did not attend the NATO summit in Washington, sending his foreign minister instead. But the previous week he visited President Carter at the White House, and told him that France would work with the US in organizing an African peace-keeping force to cope with any future radical moves in the region. This week, the French are hosts in Paris to a conference that is designed to put together such a force.

The French idea is for NATO nations, notably France and Belgium, to provide training and arms for an African peace-keeping contingent—and even to supply troops, if needed. The US would be expected to contribute logistics—that is, equipment for an airlift and other special duties.

During the NATO summit, the French foreign minister let it be known that France was willing, in effect, to be responsible for the situation in western Africa, because of its cultural and linguistic ties to that region. He said Britain should assume a similar role in east Africa and Rhodesia. There may be joint responsibility, he suggested, in the Horn of Africa, where France still keeps 4000 troops in newly independent Djibouti.

France is even pressing Carter to get tougher with the Russians on all fronts. Giscard is known to think that the US should "punish" the Soviets for their activities in Africa, as well as for the new military deployments in central Europe. One idea the French delegation floated in Washington last week was for the US to halt grain sales to the Soviet Union and to reduce the flow of sophisticated technology until the Russians start behaving again. The French do not believe that much would be gained from linking the current negotiations for a new Soviet-American strategic arms limitation agreement (SALT) with the African and central European situations. They think, however, that stopping grain exports would hurt the Russians badly, given their dependence on American farm products.

Privately, the French are talking an even tougher game than recent public pronouncements by Carter and his national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. A senior French official visiting Washington last week said his government believes that there should be a more "adequate" response from the West to the Soviet encroachment. He said that the leaders of Western Europe feel that a "powerful US president should respond with more energy to the Soviet policy."

French officials emerged from the meetings between Giscard and Carter with the impression that the president has "no margin for maneuver"—especially in Africa—because of legislative constraints on policy making. Giscard is known to greatly deplore these constraints, and to hope to see them corrected by the US Congress.

France has conveyed to the American government its concern over Carter's decision to postpone the development of the neutron bomb. France believes that the US should be ready to come to the rescue of Europe by any means at its disposal, as another French official put it last week.

The NATO summit has produced no overall Western strategy toward the Soviet Union, the French point out. They obviously are keen on playing a major new role in redefining the East-West relationship. This was the message Giscard gave Carter at their meeting.

American diplomats generally welcome the new French posture. They think Giscard has decided that a power vacuum exists in the Western alliance and France may now be able to fill it. They see Giscard becoming a foreign policy activist, closely associated with American views, as one of the results of the defeat of the leftist coalition in last March's French parliament elections. This assessment was, in effect, confirmed by French officials in Washington last week, who told their American counterparts that Giscard's new policies enjoy full support at home, except from Communists and "doctrinaire Socialists."

The same American officials have been using every opportunity to underline how the Franco-American "dialogue" has developed in recent months, notably since March, and that a new relationship now exists between the two governments. In tune with the Carter administration's recent courtship of China—in Peking last month, Brzezinski stressed the community of US

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and Chinese interests in defending against the Soviet threat—the French also believe that the West should supply "defensive" weapons to China.

Giscard's new foreign policy was unquestionably the greatest boost Carter has received in a long time in his efforts to build a coherent approach to the Soviets in Africa and elsewhere. And, ironically, it came from a government whose head chose not to attend the NATO summit.

Tad Szulc

It's coming, and here's why.

The First Carter Recession

Is it good news when a president and his recently appointed Federal Reserve chairman exchange compliments after the current fashion of Jimmy Carter and G. William Miller? Let us see.

Miller at least has good reason to be pleased with the White House. In a repeat of last year's withdrawal of the $50 tax rebate, Carter has trimmed his proposed tax cut and postponed its effective date to January 1979. Demoting unemployment to second place, the president has nominated inflation as the nation's number-one problem. He has appointed the Texas Demosthenes, Robert Strauss, as inflation czar. Moreover, he has unleashed Barry Bosworth, chairman of the toothless Council on Wage and Price Stability, which in the past did little more than issue mournful complaints about prices and wages after they had risen. Bosworth has warned the railwaymen and the postal workers to moderate their wage demands in forthcoming negotiations. Even more strikingly, he intervened in the midst of actual bargaining between the Western Pulp and Paper Workers and their employers. Bosworth called the union demands "outsized and alarming," and even complained about the size of the companies' counter offers: of 9.5 percent the first year, 8.5 percent the second year and 7.5 percent in the contract's final year. AT&T and General Motors have promised to increase the salaries of their major executives by no more than five percent. Nothing, it is true, was said about stock options and more esoteric forms of managerial compensation. Somewhat embarrassingly it was revealed that General Motors had actually raised executive salaries only three or four percent last year. A raise limited to five percent for Thomas Murphy, GM's chairman, incidentally, would amount to a shade less than $50,000. No matter, the war on inflation is on.

Thus encouraged, Miller has praised his president and hinted that he might even refrain from tightening the monetary screws much further. But in the meantime short-term interest rates continue to rise and the Treasury on May 23 marketed a $2.39 billion issue of two-year notes at a yield above 8 percent. Mortgage money is scarce, expensive and in states like New York with usury laws practically unobtainable. The Federal Housing Administration in May raised its loan rate to 9 percent, the highest figure since January 1976. Consumers can be confident that the credit costs of buying new cars and appliances will increase sharply. In other words, Carter has less cause to be pleased with Miller than the other way around.

No, Virginia, the news is bad. Subject as always to changes of mind in the White House, sweet harmony between the president and the Fed must be interpreted as acceptance by the former of the latter's priorities. About these, there is no mystery. Like any other central bank, our Federal Reserve worries much more about inflation than about unemployment. Tacitly Miller and his six colleagues on the Board of Governors are willing to accept a new recession as the price of progress against inflation. Their stoicism in this regard very likely will be put to the test. The present expansion, never a particularly vigorous specimen, is a bit long in the tooth as it proceeds into a fourth year. As usually occurs near the peak of business cycles, productivity is improving at more and more sluggish rates, unions are striving desperately to keep their members' paychecks even with the cost of living, and prices and profits are rising at a pace that is publicly deplored and privately applauded.

For President Carter the prospect is so grim that one rather expects announcement of a presidential junket to China or the Middle East. If the president had persevered in his tax policy, exerted real pressure on Congress to move on welfare reform (a fairly expensive proposition), urban programs (another expensive item), and national health (the most expensive of all), he might well have offended Congress and alarmed an inflation-conscious public. He surely would have given William Miller a sufficient reason to deploy still more vigorously the dread weapons of Federal Reserve restraint: open market sales of government securities and upward adjustments of reserve requirements and the discount rate. Six percent unemployment near the top of a business cycle is sickeningly high. Nevertheless, most people have jobs and, therefore, are more concerned about paying their bills than about the danger of losing their jobs in the future.

In order to get the president and the Congress to concentrate on prolonging the expansion and further reducing unemployment, a political prerequisite is simultaneous success in restraining inflation. Here Carter has been his own worst enemy. By repeating in stronger and stronger language his antipathy to mandatory price and wage controls, he has in effect surrendered the only alternative to recession as anti-

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inflation therapy. No amount of jawboning will substitute for direct controls in the many places where sellers exert substantial control over the prices of the commodities and services they market. Among the nominees for attention are most of the major manufacturing industries—autos, steel, pharmaceuticals, aluminum, chemicals, and food processing among others. Others worthy of attention include hospitals, lawyers and doctors. The only way a populist president can hope to redeem his pledges to the poor, the urban, and the black is to combine an expansionary program of social expenditure with the tough controls over inflation that will reassure the public and Congress.

Unfortunately for most of the parties concerned, the constituency for controls is small right now. In moments of despondency, I think of it as limited to John Kenneth Galbraith and myself. Unions recall with a bitterness undiminished by the passage of time and the election of a Democratic president that the Nixon controls, circa 1971-1973, were moderately effective in restraining wages and far less potent in checking prices and profits. As Arnold Weber, one of the controllers, said with admirable candor, once he was out of office, the point of the controls was to "zap" the unions. Employers are patriotic enforcers of wage controls. Also, as George Meany has pointed out, prices and wages are unsymmetrical in a second important way. A union that signs a three-year contract must abide by its terms, whatever happens to prices. Corporations, on the other hand, are free at any time to junk pledges of price restraint and abandon moderation on the executive salary front.

For their part, businessmen are too busy widening profit margins while the consumer boom still endures to accept the thought of price controls, pleased as they might be over wage restraints. Thus President Carter's modest attempt to reduce the annual rate of increase in hospital charges from 15 percent to a mere nine percent has encountered the fierce opposition of the health industry and that industry's congressional allies. The campaign appears to be going nowhere. General Motors and the rest of domestic industry, presented with a chance to recover much of the market lost to the Japanese subcompacts, have opted for raising their own prices under the shelter of larger price tags on Toyotas and Datsuns necessitated by the appreciation of the yen against the dollar. Our steelmakers, after winning the protection of reference price protection against Japanese rivals, have cheerfully upped their charges.

For the record, it is not difficult to outline a sensible strategy against inflation. One ought to begin with the recognition that in the modern world some inflation is the consequence of events beyond easy domestic control. Crop failures in Russia and China raise supermarket prices here at home. Anchovies desert the Peruvian coast. OPEC sours the investment outlook and dims the prospect for rapid growth. The decline of the dollar against stronger currencies makes German and Japanese merchandise more expensive. A second fact of economic life is the greater significance of prices than of wages as an explanation of the remainder of inflation. For years unions have been playing catch-up to rising prices. The leaders of the major unions are almost pathetically eager to bargain for noninflationary settlements if only they can offer their constituencies reasonable assurance that prices will behave themselves.

It follows that the best remedy would be selective controls over the prices of goods and services. A fine place to begin is with the *Fortune* list of 500 leading industrial corporations, few of them guilty of classical price competition. If the lawyers, doctors, and hospitals are added to this list, most of the domestically controllable agents of inflation will be included.

On grounds both of equity and institutional observation, I would supplement price controls with nothing more powerful, at least initially, than voluntary wage standards. Many variations are possible, including Carter's suggestion that wage increases be held to the average of the last two years. One possible variation might allow unions to renegotiate wages in the middle of multi-year contracts, in order to take into account increases in the cost of living—but only provided that past increases have been within the guidelines.

I do not deceive myself that such a program is politically possible right now. Nevertheless all parties—most of all the unions—should be made aware that in rejecting mandatory controls, they are surrendering an indispensable tool of policy and practically guaranteeing a recession in the near future. Otto Eckstein, of Harvard and Data Resources, Inc., recently observed that in each recent inflation the Federal Reserve has pursued monetary restraint too long and too hard. The monetary idealists who guide the Federal Reserve invariably plan for a brief, shallow, and almost painless lull in economic expansion. They discover that the fine-tuning of monetary policy is as hazardous an art as the fine-tuning of tax and expenditure policy. In the worst month of the 1974-1975 mini-depression, unemployment touched nine percent, with the usual horrifying multipliers for women, teenagers and minorities. We shall probably begin the first Carter recession with unemployment one or two percentage points higher than the start of the last downturn. If the new decline is no worse than its predecessor, general unemployment will rise to 10 or 11 percent.

The best economic news I can imagine would be a blazing row between Jimmy Carter and G. William Miller. Now that the president has given the doctors and the lawyers their lumps, he might consider taking a few well-aimed populist swipes at Federal Reserve policies that make it impossible for young families to buy homes or rent apartments, small businessmen to borrow money at tolerable interest rates and states and cities to float bonds at less than extortionate figures.

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Full employment is the most egalitarian of economic conditions. High interest rates and the recession that follows in their wake are the least egalitarian responses to inflation.

Robert Lekachman

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Ethics makes a comeback.

Teaching Morality

At universities across the country, professors and administrators are hard at work "tightening up" the curriculum, imposing new requirements, setting limits on student choice. The trend has gotten a lot of publicity and has generally won the support of the respectable people—many of whom also supported the "loosening up" of the curriculum 10 or 15 years ago. In fact, however, the reforms are more important than their publicity suggests, and the substance of the new requirements—not much discussed in the press—is more important than the mere fact of constraint. Coercing students is not in itself a good thing to do, unless it serves some vital educational purpose.

What do professors teach that is worth requiring? What do they teach that is so vital that every student ought to learn it? Evidently, professors disagree about the answers to these questions. But one answer has emerged at a number of universities that seems to me worth an intellectual defense: that is the claim that students should study moral and political philosophy, that they should be required to focus their attention on the problems of moral choice in politics, in professional life, in personal relations.

That claim is by no means uncontroversial. Writing in this journal about the "rediscovery" of ethical analysis in a series of recent books, Alasdair MacIntyre has asked (*TNR*, May 6, 1978): what on earth can be going on in a society where morality has to be rediscovered? And others have asked, in the course of the faculty debates: what kind of society is it where morality has to be taught to young men and women who are already living moral (and political) lives of their own? And more: how *can* morality be taught? Isn't there something strange and artificial in the attempt? Morality is not a skill, like basic math. We don't say that someone is very clever at morality. It is not a body of factual knowledge, such as might be presented in a first-year history course. How can it be studied?

People who ask these last questions seem to believe that education in ethics is somehow automatic, like learning a language. Moral life is the easy expression, the virtually unconscious acting out, of cultural norms inculcated in family, church or synagogue, everyday activity. Or it is easy in another way: the quick toting up of costs and benefits, requiring grade school arithmetic, not much more. Morality should not be problematic; whenever it poses problems, has to be studied, argued over, worried about, then something is wrong. We are urged to consider the decline of the family, the erosion of religious faith, cultural decadence, and so on—all good subjects, perhaps, but too quickly summoned up.

In fact, of course, the systematic study of morality by young adults is common throughout the history of civilization. Only in fairly recent times has ethics become a minor specialization in academic departments where logic and epistemology are generally thought to be more interesting. But think of the Greek academies where the idea of the good was intricately explored. Think of the talmudic schools where important ethical matters, and everyday ethical matters too, were endlessly debated. Or think of the great medieval universities where casuistry—the application of conscience to cases—was a central part of the curriculum. Today, even the words to describe these activities have become, for many, derogatory terms: academic, talmudic, scholastic, casuistic. The words suggest an inordinate attention to irrelevant detail. Indeed, the work done in those old schools was detailed, and it was academic. But it was also intimately responsive to social needs. One can read social history out of the talmudic and scholastic texts: a special kind of social history, thick with moral concern.

A similar concern was still visible in 19th and 20th century universities, though it gradually ceased to dominate academic life. Courses in moral philosophy, social ethics, political theory were conventionally required. For a long time it was central to higher education that there was a common morality, and that it had to be *worked on* by each new generation of teachers and students.

So what kind of society is it where morality has to be taught? It is the same kind of society it has always been. Why this fact should have to be rediscovered, however, is a harder question. Somehow, over a period of decades, we became increasingly hesitant about moral education. Today, the teaching of ethics isn't easily or naturally associated with the other things we do. Our moral life, one might say, is repressed (the way our immoral lives are supposed to be). And so a required course in ethics looks artificial, like something woven out of synthetic fibers rather than out of the organic material of "real life."

In part, ethics is dissociated from the rest of academic work by a one-sided conception of social science. In this view, statements of value, because they cannot be proven true or false, cannot be studied at all. Values can't be analyzed, we are told; they can only be chosen,

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and the choice is irrational, ungovernable, without criteria. Hence teaching is impossible, the presumtuous invasion of a mysterious realm where professors, with their secular and scientific training, have nothing to say. Courses on ethics become courses on the history of ethical ideas. The sharp edge of analysis, argument and application is blunted and then lost altogether.

But the dissociation of ethics has roots that go deeper than this crude positivism. The decline of family, faith, and culture may well be among these roots, but I think our present dilemma derives not from decline but from triumph. It derives from the triumph of American liberalism and, within liberalism, of two different but related approaches to moral life. The two approaches are both appropriate to the major figures of American popular literature and cinema: the hard, seasoned, lonely frontiersman and the tough, sophisticated, urban wise guy. These are the mythical embodiments of liberal individualism, and their influence is felt even in the academy. They are part of the common culture of teachers and students.

The first American liberal approach to moral life is a special kind of relativism. Values, it is said, are deeply personal and private. They are not to be discussed among men, or among *real* men. The American hero is masculine and reticent, strong and silent. (In his urban embodiment, a stream of wisecracks conceals the deeper reticence.) Hence, there cannot be any serious moral dialogue or criticism, though there can be a kind of inarticulate contempt or disgust for unforgivable behavior. In public, we can only hold a man to his own standards: honor, sincerity, grace under pressure. These can be talked about, but not virtue or goodness. Moral judgment focused on questions of virtue or goodness is *moralizing*, the sure sign of self-righteousness, priggishness and hypocrisy. In contrast to all previous understandings, moral life in the United States is conceived to be a form of private life. This is, perhaps, in accordance with liberal doctrine, but it is an extraordinary conception—for one could hardly be moral, or immoral, without other people.

The second typically American approach to moral life is a special kind of utilitarianism, which I have already referred to as cost/benefit analysis. The reference is not fair to utilitarian philosophers; it is intended only to capture an ethical view common among people convinced by positivist social science that deeper values really can't be talked about. Heroic reticence is the better part of wisdom. But when decisions are unavoidable, they must be hard-headed, tough-minded, unsentimental, worked out in terms of the actual or supposed preferences of discrete individuals. The standards must be clear—utiles of pleasure, dollars, lives—qualities than can be turned into quantities, so that the ultimate decision is as indisputable as addition and subtraction and so that there is, once again, no room for moralizing. At its practical worst, this is bodycount morality; at its academic best, it involves the systematic application of economic models to every aspect of moral and political life. The economic models often are useful, but they don't serve to enhance our moral understanding. Instead, they replace it with understanding of a different sort.

These are the two American modes: either intense subjectivity or radical objectivity. But neither of these, it seems to me, conforms to the realities of our common moral life. Both of them are willful, a posturing in the face of experiences that the postures don't fit. The truth is that we all experience moral difficulty, we worry over hard decisions, we make moral judgments, we criticize other people, we defend ourselves. And we do all this in a moral language that does not owe its general structure or its central terms either to the relativism or to the utilitarianism I have just described. It is dependent, instead, on older moralities, remarkably resistant to cultural or intellectual transformation. Moral language is shared even when we use it to talk about, and to disagree about, the most difficult issues—in war, in politics, in personal life. According to that common language, people are not only sincere and insincere, but good and bad; the decisions they make don't only involve costs and benefits, but rights and wrongs, justice and injustice. Our understanding of moral experience rests upon shared, though not easy, notions of positive and negative rules, of obligations and human rights, of benevolence and kindness, and so on. The negative rules are most evident. Morality rests most deeply on a series of prohibitions: *Thou shalt not. . . .* The strong silent hero doesn't help to build a world in which those prohibitions can be maintained. For they are not in fact a personal code. If they are not publicly reiterated and elaborated, they will be eaten away by tough-minded calculation.

Studying these rules is no guarantee of their effectiveness. It won't lead people to make the right moral choices, since we will continue to disagree about what the right choices are. But it may enable people to talk about moral questions more self-consciously and more openly; it may help them to make more reflective judgments; and it may compel them to defend in public the substance of what they do.

The strong silent hero remains attractive, I suppose. One would not want Humphrey Bogart to stop in the middle of *Casablanca*, say, and deliver a lecture on just and unjust wars. But it is important to understand that his gut feelings and his instinct for the good are parasitic on other people's lectures, on a whole tradition of moral discourse. It is also important to understand that his silence is at least in part inauthentic and historically false. For in war, men and women face hard choices, and have to think about them. And since those choices are not only personal but also collective, they have to think out loud, to argue, to criticize, to persuade. On these occasions it is not all that helpful to be heroic but inarticulate.

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When men and women can't talk about moral questions—when they imagine all such talk to be unscientific, a sign of weakness and sentimentality—then they simply live off the accumulated stock of older decisions and understandings. Or they function without the controls of tradition and common discourse, and fall prey to the crudest kinds of moral extremism. They become fanatics of the cause, ready to do anything for their party or country. Or, as easily, they become fanatics of the self, ready to do anything to advance their own careers. Against this sort of thing, moral education should aim not at moderation, which is not always appropriate, but at publicity, argument and discipline.

The disappearance of ethics as a subject of study is rather like the end of ideology. The wish for a world free of doctrinal dispute, uncluttered with controversial vocabularies, a world where shared commitments have been replaced by preferences privately conceived and pragmatically pursued: all this reflects deep features of liberal culture. But the wish is utopian; it cannot be realized in any imaginable form of social life. So when in our books and college courses we argue about distributive justice, killing in war, deception in politics, medical ethics and so on, we are not engaged in a strange activity, a desperate effort to make up for the loss of religious faith or the collapse of standards or the rising divorce rate, or whatever ails us. We are engaged in a common human activity—in its less systematic forms an unavoidable activity—temporarily discontinued at American universities, at some cost. Now it is apparently about to be resumed. That resumption is not in itself anti-liberal, but it does challenge deep-seated liberal suppositions. It presses us back toward older moralities, or forward to newer ones, in which personal choice and utilitarian calculation are subjected to the discipline of a public philosophy.

Michael Walzer

Michael Walzer, a professor of government at Harvard, is the author of *Just and Unjust Wars* (Basic).

They're not lovable, but they're likable enough.

Making Pals with the Saudis

by Morton Kondracke

Riyadh

All the worst things we Westerners have heard about Saudi Arabia are true. The Saudis really do behead people for rape and murder—about four per year. About as many Saudis each year lose a hand for repeated acts of robbery. Saudi women are required to wear veils in public and are forbidden social contact with men outside their families. It is illegal for women to drive cars. Polygamy is unfashionable among the Saudi smart set, but it still is practiced in other elements of society. A woman can get killed for adultery or fornication in order to preserve the "honor" of her family. Meanwhile sheiks, princes and other men are free to enjoy as much sex as they can get on visits abroad or with Western women here. Good Moslems are supposed to abstain from drinking alcohol, and liquor is absolutely illegal. But it is readily available at $40 a fifth and it is widely consumed. Public drunkenness is punishable by flogging.

There is plenty else here to offend Western sensibilities. Oil riches have produced in Jeddah and Riyadh a pervasive sense of corruption, of madcap scramble for shares in a bottomless boodle. You can blame shortages and inflation for causing ordinary little hotel rooms to cost $100 a night, but taxi drivers get $15 for a 10-minute cab ride by pure extortion. A Western businessman told me that his company pays a bribe for every single invoice it gets approved by Saudi authorities, and that he ends up charging the Saudis four times the prices that comparable work would cost in the US. Saudis claim that ripping off works both ways and that they are often victims of overpricing and shoddy workmanship.

And then there is the political system, under which there are no elections, no parties, no legislature, no free press, no unions, no public dissent. The regime is so rigid about its religious and political ban on "secret" societies that it recently expelled a group of Western businessmen who had set up a chapter of the Masons. This is one of the richest nations on earth, involved in the most important decisions facing the modern world,

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and it is ruled not by its five million citizens, but by a royal family of 4000 males whose king, leading princes and appointed ministers render their decisions by undebatable decree.

All of this can lead one to conclude that Saudi Arabia is a brutal, hypocritical, corrupt, fanatical, reactionary, autocratic society totally out of place in the late 20th century and unfit to survive, let alone help rule the world. The Soviet Union and the radical Arabs certainly think this way. So do most Israelis and, undoubtedly, so do lots of Americans, who view with deep regret that our oil dependency should force us into a "special relationship" with a country such as this. No one has figured out any reasonable alternative to a friendship with the Saudis, of course, and so we are stuck with them.

But we can take some heart, I think. There is more to Saudi Arabia than what is worst about it. It is, on inspection, a society with its own inner logic and integrity. It is an old society that developed its mores in the cruel desert, but it has been a country for only 46 years and it became a fabulously rich and important country only four years ago. It is undergoing economic and social change at a speed that would disintegrate many cultures, but it is holding together by dint of religious conviction and wise leadership. Saudi Arabia is no democracy, but neither is it a despotism. Its rulers seem genuinely devoted to the prosperity of their people, as well as of themselves. They are moderate in almost every way, and more pro-American than many Americans. On the whole, considering the sort of people God might have chosen to set atop one-fourth of the world's proven oil reserves, and those who might yet try to seize this treasure, I'd say we are lucky to have the Saudis.

Many visitors to Saudi Arabia are most impressed by the construction it is undertaking everywhere, by its wealth, by $15 billion desalinization projects, $30 billion new industrial cities, $14 billion petrochemical complexes, new ports, natural gas projects and schemes (impractical though they may be) to tow icebergs up from the south pole for fresh water.

It is impressive, all right. But what struck me more was how poor—or, rather, underdeveloped—Saudi Arabia still is. Plunk someone down in a back street in Jeddah and he might think, but for people's dress and their Arabic, that he was in Mexico or the Philippines. Where most of the people live, the streets are as dirty, as rubbish-strewn and as choked with beeping traffic in Saudi Arabia, with its per-capita gross domestic product of $7500, as in countries where the figure is $500 (which, in fact, is what Saudi Arabia's was in 1960; by 1970, it was still only about $1000).

Jeddah and Riyadh have shanty towns as primitive as in any Appalachian hollow or third-world slum—places where bedouin live in shacks constructed of packing crates, cardboard and tin, and have their goats tied up amid rubble and what one haughty Westerner called "that distinctive form of Saudi vegetation, the tissue bush." Saudi slum dwellers have things fellow proletarians elsewhere do not have, including Japanese pickup trucks, but their vital statistics are not appreciably different. For all the country's riches, less than 50 percent of Saudi Arabia's population is literate. The actual figure may be as low as 20 percent. The government's five-year development plan sets a 1980 goal of getting infant mortality down to eleven dead babies per hundred births.

What impresses me about Saudi Arabia is not just where it is and where it is moving, but how far back it is coming from and how swiftly it is traveling. It is disgraceful, no question, that only 30 percent of elementary-school-age girls are receiving education. But as recently as 1960, there was no education for women at all, and almost all employment was also forbidden. To establish girls' schools, the late King Faisal had to overcome the country's conservative religious establishment, the *ulema*. He did so, rather shrewdly, by placing the schools under *ulema* controls. After a time the reactionaries were clamoring for more of them. Now, about 250,000 female Saudis are in school, including 11,000 in universities.

Tradition, and the power of the *ulema* to enforce it, keep education and employment sexually segregated and produce some ridiculous customs. Only blind men are permitted to teach girls in person; other male instructors appear on closed-circuit television. Women are permitted to work as teachers, nurses, doctors and social workers, but the *ulema* is constantly railing against their employment elsewhere. They do work, in offices and in some government agencies, but usually hidden from view. It created a scandal when unveiled women first appeared on television, but now they do so regularly. For that matter, television itself created a scandal—and riots, too—when broadcasting first began. Now color TV sets are practically ubiquitous and the public is demanding more than one channel.

All over Saudi society, a wrestling match is going on between representatives of the 10th and 20th centuries. In almost every case the government sides with modernity, but officials claim they dare not move too fast for fear of losing legitimacy, or causing a violent reaction. With the country facing a labor shortage that requires it to import a million foreign workers, government planners strongly favor employment for Saudi women. But they have to contend with the fact that the fathers, brothers and husbands of those women are still influenced by old patterns and by powerful religious elements urging that the old ways be retained.

"If we decreed tomorrow that women were totally equal," one important government official said, "Who would obey it?" A colleague said: "Yet it is all coming. Women will drive. They will work. The veils will come off." There is a lively women's movement (though it

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would never call itself that in public) putting pressure on the government. It operates through social welfare societies. At the moment, it is urging practical advances such as segregated public transportation to get women to and from their jobs, and day care centers for working mothers.

Members of the women's movement and other Saudi progressives argue that subjugation of women is a perversion of Islam, not an essential of it. According to them, the Koran teaches only that women should be modest before men, not that they should be invisible. Islamic teaching does permit women to own and inherit property and to sue a man, even her husband, for ill-treatment. A man can divorce his wife merely by declaring his intent three times, but he is required to pay her a settlement under terms established before the marriage.

Saudi Arabia's particularly puritanical customs are the legacy of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, a fanatical preacher who teamed up with the warrior sheik Muhammad Ibn Saud in the mid-18th century to conquer and purify the Arabian peninsula. Saud married Wahhab's daughter, setting up the royal line that ruled part of Arabia until 1932, when King Abdul al-Aziz al-Saud (widely known as Ibn Saud) concluded the conquest and created the world's only country named after a family. Wahhabism, strictly interpreted, forbids dancing, smoking, most art and the wearing of colorful clothing. Saudi Arabia clearly has moved beyond that.

Yet even Saudi progressives do not favor making their country resemble the United States of America. "I would hate to see the day when there are no penalties for fornication," said one woman educator. "When sex gets to be like a basketball game, it will be the end of the family, the society, everything we value." She seemed to acknowledge that death was a bit extreme as a penalty, but she contended that it is rarely imposed by the courts. There are cases, she said, when family males kill girls or their lovers for "staining the family honor" and get away with it; but legally they have committed murder. Rumor has it that Prince Muhammad, brother of King Khalid, may yet be charged with a crime for ordering the deaths of his granddaughter, Princess Misha, and her lover. Saudis stoutly deny that the killings occurred because the princess wanted to marry a commoner, as the British press reported. Such marriages happen all the time. I heard at least four versions of what actually happened. According to the most authoritative (because it came from a prince), Misha and her lover, when caught and questioned, accused each other of rape and seduction, whereupon Muhammad, the grandfather, flew into a rage that no one could talk him out of. I couldn't find anyone who defended what he did.

But the Saudis do defend beheadings and hand choppings, claiming that these measures are responsible for the country's low crime rate. They cannot resist reminding Americans of how much safer it is to walk their streets than ours. They claim we would have fewer "Son of Sam" and "Hillside Strangler" cases if we returned to capital punishment. One government official added, "from the victim's viewpoint, I don't know that electrocution is any less brutal than beheading." Even Saudis who drink liquor at home defend the ban on import of alcohol. "If it was legal, they'd have a string of bars up and down the Mecca road," said an American observer in Jeddah. "I wouldn't call that progress and they wouldn't either."

A key to understanding Saudi behavior seems to be the distinction Saudis make between what is permissible in private and what they will allow in public. In private they drink, watch "R" and "X" rated movies on videotape machines and allow their wives and daughters to wear bikinis. In public, all the rigid norms are observed. To us, it all seems hypocritical. But a psychologist explained that while we Westerners are motivated by guilt to avoid doing what we shouldn't, the Saudis are motivated by shame at being seen doing it. Some observers argue that hypocrisy also serves as a safety valve for this changing society—allowing people to adopt new mores without having to admit to each other that they are doing so. Others think that the increasing conflict between private Western behavior and public Eastern conduct will lead to increasing mental illness for individuals and/or cultural and political upheaval.

Some Americans claim to have intimate friendships with Saudis, but I certainly did not get close enough to any to judge whether they are rattled by the double life they lead. It strikes me as a healthy sign, however, that unlike the situation for most other countries, practically 100 percent of the 20,000 Saudis who go to universities abroad (half to the US) return home when their studies are finished. The chance to share in the country's oil wealth obviously accounts for part of this, but family loyalty and dedication to their culture also are important.

One of the Western institutions that Saudi leaders claim they aren't ready for yet is democracy. They argue that their system, in essence, is more responsive than ours anyway. Almost every day of the week, King Khalid or Crown Prince Fahd sits for *majlis*, when any citizen is free to say his piece. "This isn't a tour of the White House," according to a Saudi editor who has watched it. "People say all kinds of things to the king. They don't bow and scrape the way I might." Although the Saudi government seems to rule absolutely, in fact it is limited by Islamic law, the *shari'a*, which protects individual rights; and by a tradition of obtaining a consensus before issuing decrees. Each Monday, for example, Fahd reserves time for hearing the *ulema's* latest complaints about the evils of modernization. Debate among government ministers is said to be surprisingly free-swinging, though it all goes on in

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places that are far from the public view.

So far as Western diplomats can judge, there is no serious internal challenge to the government system. The Saudi ruling class is neither squandering nor seizing the country's riches, but is providing free education, free medical care, interest-free home loans, subsidized food and other benefits to the population, and is trying to develop industrial, transportation and communications systems—at a total five-year development cost of $142 billion—that will keep the country properous even when Saudi Arabia's oil runs out, if it ever does. Saudi Arabia does have high inflation—some say 20 percent; others, 100 percent—but incomes seem to keep ahead of prices. For the time being, there is no disgruntled *lumpenproletariat*, no unemployed intelligentsia. Foreigners, including a small complement of Palestinians, are kept dispersed and disorganized. For any prince or ambitious commoner there seem to be ample opportunities for money making, education and high office under the present system, and no reason to change it.

Still, rumors persist and precautions are taken. One rumor I heard twice from reliable sources—but could not check with any responsible Saudi—was that a cache of weapons, either 1000 rifles or machine guns—had been discovered within the past two months at the Jeddah port, which was promptly closed down for further searches. The Saudis supposedly detained officials of the Western firm in whose shipment the weapons were concealed. It is a fact that a key Saudi national guard official in the Western sector has been replaced. But it is not clear whether the change is linked to a weapons discovery. To assure security, Saudi Arabia maintains what amounts to two armies: a regular force, stationed at the edges of the nation's vast territory, and the national guard, which is kept closer to population centers. The army, air force and national guard are headed or heavily infiltrated with members of the royal family. Meanwhile, Saudi newspapers are not pre-censored, but operate under licenses that can be revoked for misbehavior. Any serious dissent, reportedly, results in swift arrest.

If democracy comes, it will come slowly, perhaps beginning with local or provincial elections or with creation of an advisory parliament. Under present circumstances, if Saudi Arabia were a democracy its government almost certainly would not be as progressive, moderate or stable as it is. (Its stability was demonstrated in 1975, when King Faisal was assassinated by a mentally deranged nephew, and King Khalid was confirmed immediately and without unrest.) At the same time, the Saudi system does contain enough resiliency for a bad king to be replaced, as was Faisal's incompetent brother, Saud, who ruled from 1953 to 1964. The family also has demonstrated the wisdom to pass over unqualified senior princes and to pick competent ones to rule. The kings, in turn, have picked highly educated commoners to help them. Of the 25 members of the Council of Ministers, eight have PhDs, which is probably a higher proportion than in most Western countries, where cabinet jobs tend to go to politicians, business tycoons as well as Wall Street corporate lawyers.

If Saudi Arabia were a democracy, especially given its high illiteracy rate, what would be its policies toward the United States and Israel? At present, the Saudis need to pump only about four million barrels of oil a day to meet their modernization needs, but they actually pump 8.5 million to keep the Western economies operating. We want them to go to 14 million by 1985. It's not a gift, of course, but a Saudi leader would have a difficult time explaining to his constituents why he was selling all that oil in return for dollars that decline in value instead of leaving it in the ground, where its value will only increase.

It's true, the Saudis are strongly pro-American because we offer them protection against the Soviet Union and radical Arabs. But you can just see Saudi politicians, if they had to run for election, campaigning for a "fairer shake" on oil prices, higher returns on investments in the US than they get for Treasury bills, and weapons purchases from countries that give them less hassle then they get from the US Congress over the F-15 sale.

Meanwhile, despite their reputation among many American Jews as being bent on *jihad* (holy war), Saudi leaders say they accept Israel's existence and will make peace if Israel withdraws to its 1967 borders. The Saudis continue giving aid to Egypt, though they fear Sadat's peace initiative will fail and he may be overthrown by radicals. The Saudis favor a Palestinian link with Jordan, though they think they could control an independent Palestinian state. They want Arab control of old Jerusalem, but they are not adamant on the point. They give money to Yassir Arafat because, say officials, they would rather he ran the PLO than George Habash. The Saudi position is not the fulfillment of Israel's dreams, but it is far more moderate than it might be—probably would be—if subject to the influence of demogogic politicians.

And so, I conclude that I do not like Saudi Arabia. I do not like the climate or the way Saudi men treat their women. I do not like corruption, even if the Saudis are trying to control it. I do not like the idea of kings, princes or unfree presses. I prefer guilt over shame as a motivational force. I do not much like the people, either. With exceptions, they aren't terribly friendly. They seem to think that only Moslems are real people, and that Saudi Moslems are better than everybody. And yet, there is a country that is headed in most of the right directions, if slowly. We should do all we can to decrease our dependency on them. We shouldn't sell ourselves to the Saudis, or sell them any of our friends. But we should help to defend them and try to understand them.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Communist Films, Two Kinds

Marxist esthetics has, at its best, been better than most Marxist art. From the beginning Marx and Engels had ideas on the subject that subsequently have usually been ignored. Engels told a novelist that he was not at fault for failing to write "an authentic Socialist novel": "That is not at all what I meant. The more carefully concealed the author's opinions are, the better it is for a work of art." More positively, Marx wrote to Lassalle about the latter's tragedy that he "ought to have allowed the heroes of his tragedy the possibility of being faithful to their own selves, of testing their capabilities to the very limit, of exploring the internal, organic dialectics of their own personalities." (Henri Arvon in *Marxist Esthetics.*)

One film from a Communist country that splendidly satisfied these injunctions was *Memories of Underdevelopment* by Tomas Gutiérrez Alea, made in 1968 and shown here five years later (*TNR*, May 19, '73). It explored the dilemma of a cultivated bourgeois who was unsettled but fascinated by the changes in his country. Its sensitive candor was unexpected. Other Cuban films shown here since then have been, more or less, as expected, the artier the worse. But I clung to *Memories* as a hope, and I looked forward to more from Gutiérrez Alea. Now his next has arrived, and it's depressing.

The Last Supper (Tricontinental) completely contravenes *Memories*, as well as the precepts of Marx and Engels above. It's a laborious historical analogy, clumsy in making and in implication, ineffectual esthetically and, for that matter, politically. If *Memories* revived somewhat the idea of extension of consciousness through political change, *The Last Supper* proves yet again that the Marxist state, once changed, loses interest in change and is interested only in confirmation.

Gutiérrez Alea made only one film in the nine-year interim, *A Cuban Struggle against the Demons* (unseen here) which he himself has called "very confused because it is too overladen with various layers of meaning and with excessively difficult metaphors." What a familiar smack of party-dictated recantation in that line. Well, *The Last Supper* is very *un*confused, too overladen with various layers of banality and with excessively transparent metaphors.

It's the end of the 18th century. A Cuban aristocrat, very religious, drives out from Havana to his sugar mill for Holy Week, and on Holy Thursday he invites 12 of his black slaves to supper in his mansion, washes and kisses their feet, then dines with them. The next day, Good Friday, the slaves refuse to work, feeling that the master will support their religious observance. But the master orders armed men to help the overseer put the slaves to work. The slaves kill the overseer and set fire to the mill. Eleven of the 12 who attended the supper are caught and beheaded. The twelfth, the strongest and most rebellious, has escaped into the hills and is running free.

We have only to see the religiosity of the master at the beginning to know that he is being set up for disillusion. (A touch of Buñuel's *Viridiana* here.) We have only to see his self-abasement to know that it will turn to vindictiveness. Why else would the film have been made in a Communist country? From beginning to end it's a predictable, attenuated demonstration of the deceit of religion, the basic illiberality of the liberal. His manners may be good, but they disappear in the crunch because his belief in property is stronger.

That last is probably true (although, for me, it doesn't in itself make liberalism less preferable than other views). But in ideological terms the film commits the basic Marxist lie. It implies that the deplorable deceits and tyrannies and egocentricities dramatized here will disappear in a Marxist state when, as a matter of too easily cited horrible history, they are merely metamorphosed into different channels under different names and are often aggravated. Inarguably most Cubans are better off now than these slaves were or, to be more pertinent, than most Cubans were on my only visit, in 1954. But if there were no other index than the difference between *Memories* and *The Last Supper*, we still might infer that the price for this unquestionable improvement has not yet begun to be paid, or imagined, in Cuba.

Quite apart from ideology, the filmmaking is at such a polar remove from

Avtandil Varazi in "Pirosmani."

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Memories as to be a cultural statement in itself. I kept thinking of those elephantine Czech symbolic films of the mid-1960s. The editing makes painfully meaningful juxtapositions, the camerawork is pretty-pretty, and in the supper scene, which seems interminable, the repeated zooms are like increasingly loud declarations of esthetic bankruptcy. The picture ends with the escaped slave, the defiant one (the indomitable spirit of the common man, see?), running through the forest. His flight is intercut with a shot of wild riderless horses. Pudovkin, thou shouldst *not* be living at this hour.

Communist films are at their best, obviously, when film-makers of talent choose subjects that can be explored to their fullest and developed in ultimate subtlety without abrading the dicta of the state. Such a film is *Pirosmani* (Entertainment Marketing Corp.), made by the Soviet Georgian director Georgi Shengelaya. It deals with the life of a Georgian painter (1863-1918) whose full name was Nikola Pirosmanishvili, previously unknown to me, and whose work—to judge by the samples we see—is comparable to that of Henri Rousseau.

Shengelaya is the son of a film director, Nikolai (40 years ago a Georgian representative in the Supreme Soviet); his mother was a film actress, his brother is also a film-maker. The medium is so easy to him that he is able to strike quickly and hold consistently a difficult, abstract, parabolic style. Pirosmani is seen as quasi-monastic. (As in *The Last Supper,* Christian resonances are used for laic ends.) The picture has almost no overt emotion—an exception being his near violence when he breaks off his arranged wedding after the celebration has started. We simply watch Pirosmani's passage through life, his working-out of an accepted fate. What holds us is Shengelaya's crystalline conviction about the man, further crystallized in a quietly intense style.

We see the story of an artist of the Georgian people, briefly diverted by bourgeois seductions, who returns to his people. His relations with them nourish him every way except financially, which matters little to him, and his art flourishes through his relations with them. None of this is *said* (thus obeying Engels), all of it is woven into the fabric of a beautifully wrought film.

Avtandil Varazi has unostentatious dignity as Pirosmani; the question of his credibility never even rises. The visual texture of the film echoes the qualities of Pirosmani's painting: Shengelaya uses 19th-century clerestory lighting; settings so distilled in their realism as to be almost abstract; compositions so delicately balanced and symmetrical that the effect is complex; editing whose ellipses follow Pirosmani's following of his impulses. One of the tacit pleasures of the film is the way we see Pirosmani's art ingesting his life. For instance, in one scene, we see him in a café in Tiflis watching a *chanteuse.* End of scene. Later we are in one of the taverns that are his best customers, and we see his painting of that singer on the wall.

Occasionally the spareness of the film and its adagio pace bring it close to the brink of languor, but always it is finely saved: by, let's call it, a dynamics of purity. A life of unconscious humility is told with conscious humility; the doubling gives *Pirosmani* a firm and winning life. And, as noted, the subject is fulfilled because its fulfillment was possible within the perimeter of Soviet ideology.

Update Note. I've lost my bet (*TNR,* May 6) that Charles Chaplin's body would never be found or offered for ransom. Still there's something odd in the story. The coffin was held 76 days before a move was made, and then the ransom was asked for *by telephone calls,* which of course the police traced. Why the long delay? Why the stupidity of the calls? It sounds as if there had been a change of plans after the theft and/or that the coffin changed hands.

Khachaturian's Legacy

Several weeks ago in Moscow, the composer Aram Khachaturian—the last of the giants of Soviet music—died in the 75th year of his life. His obituary, printed in *Pravda* and other official papers, was signed by Leonid Brezhnev himself, a lofty form of posthumous homage reserved for but a chosen few.

There was a further gesture to emphasize a close link between the late

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Years ended December 31,

	1977	1976
Income		
Life premiums	$22,340,297	$16,150,742
Accident and health premiums	25,683,413	23,593,214
Investment and other income	4,799,481	4,090,525
Total income	52,823,191	43,834,481
Benefits and expenses		
Life claims and other benefits	4,126,231	3,735,055
Accident and health claims	12,430,024	11,644,002
Increase in liability for future policy benefits	12,196,239	8,711,984
Amortization of policy acquisition costs	5,183,133	4,431,061
Commissions	5,943,151	5,224,771
General expenses and insurance taxes	5,869,697	5,652,642
Dividends to policyholders	298,064	299,032
	46,046,539	39,698,547
Income before income taxes and realized investment gains (losses)	6,776,652	4,135,934
Provision for income taxes		
Current	—	—
Deferred	1,909,150	1,209,252
Income before realized investment gains (losses)	4,867,502	2,926,682
Realized investment gains (losses)	11,364	356,057
Net income	$ 4,878,866	$ 3,282,739
Earnings per share		
Income before realized investment gains (losses)	$ 2.88	$ 1.76
Realized investment gains (losses)	.01	.21
Net income	$ 2.89	$ 1.97

Assets	$116,000,000
Insurance in Force	$ 1,289,000

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composer and the state: during the splendiferous funeral ceremony, Premier Aleksei Kosygin stood in honor guard beside Khachaturian's coffin. Radio and television stations broadcast, besides Khachaturian's music, paeans about him as one of the greatest masters of socialist art.

In the West, where Khachaturian enjoyed enormous popularity (not only for "Saber Dance," his "musical best-seller," but also as the composer of symphonies, piano and violin concertos and two ballets—"Gayaneh" and "Spartacus") the death of the composer evoked large-scale responses to his work. It may be noted in surprise that some of these responses coincided with declarations by Soviet commentators. For example, the venerable music critic of *The New York Times*, Harold C. Schonberg (who seldom, if ever, is in agreement with his Moscow colleagues), defined Khachaturian as "an exemplar of Socialist Realism."

It is somewhat rare for a person to see his own obituary in the newspaper. But I can well imagine what Khachaturian himself would have said reading such posthumous clichés. I worked with him in the last years of his life and I often saw how he hurled crumpled sheets of paper into the corner of his Moscow apartment: "What in the devil is this Socialist Realism? Socialist Realism! What do I have to do with that? I want no part of it! I know, THEY want to establish this stupid term everywhere. THEY want to foist it upon the people, while hiding behind my name! What cynicism!"

It was essential for him to shout, to pour out his irritation and helpless anger. Gradually he would calm down, consoling himself: "It is even worse for THEM. No one, you know, will believe THEM."

As we now see, he was in error.

Summing up his position on Khachaturian, Schonberg wrote:

"Some Soviet composers, such as Shostakovich, broke free of the ideologists toward the end of their careers, writing music that went against many of the Soviet 'rules.' Khachaturian never did."

This assertion may be true in the sense that the music of Khachaturian, in contrast with that of Shostakovich, contained many more joyful than tragic pages (although the provocative sensuality of his music hardly fits the term "typically Socialist"). But it is important to point out that in the last 15 years of his life, Khachaturian, again in contrast with Shostakovich, composed virtually no new music. Nonetheless, his attitudes changed and these changes gradually acquired a more dramatic character.

The debut of Khachaturian as a composer more than 40 years ago

Aram Khachaturian by Marianna Volkov

coincided with the start of the most important social-political process of our time—the decline of the old colonialist empires. Many leaders of the third world have conceded that the Bolshevik Revolution was a strong impulse for them. The new culture of the Soviet East also offered a strongly alluring promise.

As critics wrote at the time, Khachaturian became the troubadour of the arising East, its "musical idol" and the creator of the first widely known symphonic composition by an Eastern composer.

However, as we know, two definite trends later became characteristic for the cultural image of the Soviet empire: isolationism and a steadily intensifying Russification. The popularity of Khachaturian's music grew continuously, but its true cultural-historical significance changed.

Several famed and loved compositions served in fact as a cover, concealing the disdainful and cruel attitude of the Russian majority toward the musical legacy of the "backward" peoples of the East.

Khachaturian did not notice this at first, or perhaps he did not want to notice it. The tremendous success and glorification had turned his head. The sober awakening began at the start of the 1970s, when several important international musical conferences were held in the Soviet Union, and Soviet musicians had an opportunity, for the first time in decades, to become familiar with the musical ideas and philosophy of the outside world.

One of the main surprises for composers of non-Russian background was the cultural nationalism of the developing peoples, which had its origins in the Soviet East and returned from abroad like a boomerang. In music, it was expressed in a rejection of European symphonic models and in a heightened interest in more archaic forms of folklore.

Stormy discussions erupted among Soviet composers. For Khachaturian, this was without doubt his most tortured period since the infamous campaign against "formalists," to which he fell victim in 1948. But this time, Khachaturian was his own chief judge.

The old man could no longer compose music—it simply would not come out—but he remained a popular and influential teacher of composition. Students thronged to him in the Moscow Conservatory not only from all corners of the Soviet Union but also from other Socialist countries, from Cuba, the Middle East and from Asian countries.

And Khachaturian began to teach them in an entirely new way, casting aside all his earlier experience. He said to them (I heard him myself many times): "If I were 40 years old now, I would compose differently. It is impossible to blindly imitate European forms. Search out your own path. Study old religious music. This is a precious and the purest source."

One must evaluate the situation realistically to grasp the (paradoxical though it may be) revolutionary significance of such counsel. In the conditions prevailing in the present day Soviet Union, where cultural nationalism can easily develop into political nationalism, interest in ancient national traditions is looked upon by the authorities with suspicion. The recent disorders in the Soviet Trans-Caucasus, in reaction to Moscow's endeavors to abrogate the constitutional rights of indigenous languages, confirm that this suspicion is not without foundation.

Khachaturian loved to cite an old Armenian parable: "The tree complained to God about the axe and God replied: 'Why complain? After all, the axe's handle is made of wood!'"

Khachaturian no longer wanted to be the wood handle. Thereafter, he was on the side of those being chopped down.

The new Khachaturian used all the prestige and influence of the old

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Khachaturian to support the nationalist strivings of young composers. With his help, many brilliant heretical compositions were performed, which in other circumstances would have never been heard. He helped many composers to endure. He taught them, he learned from them. And he was changing.

So now the legacy of Khachaturian is not only in his compositions; it is also in the ideas he left behind, in the practical precepts and advice—the young wisdom of an old man who before death became aware anew of his roots.

Solomon Volkov

Solomon Volkov, who was a senior editor of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* and came to this country from Moscow in 1976, is working at Columbia University on a biography of Dmitri Shostakovich. This article was translated from the Russian by *Raymond H. Anderson.*

Books Considered

The Old School Tie: The Phenomenon of the English Public Schools by Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy

(Viking; $12.50)

My last fistfight was with an Old Harrovian, although I didn't realize it at the time. I was told afterwards with some relish (Etonians, of course) but I might have known in any case. Perhaps it was the aplomb with which he went flying through the door, or that vague, indefinable look of insouciance as he was about to punch me—it was all a matter of form. That, I think, is the essence of what the public school teaches, or purports to teach. In fact, it is the thesis of this book that "teach" is a rather bad word to use—"infuse" might be better, or perhaps "convey"; at any rate something less tangible and more intellectually exclusive. Education is a dangerous idea to throw around when speaking of something like the public school, largely because "education" is a term commonly associated with pedagogy.

In a nation so firmly rooted in a class structure, it is important to be mindful of the extent to which institutions set social standards, and, indeed, maintain a kind of social stability. What would England be without her public schools? She would not be England, at least not the England we know. It is not for nothing that the Levellers who would abolish them look fondly to countries afflicted with a stupefying egalitarianism: Sweden, China, etc. A class structure requires not so much prosperity as personnel, and not so much any kind of spurious aristocracy as the strength of a social notion at once pervasive and elusive. So it is, then, that the public school man is not necessarily the second son of an earl but more likely the progeny of a commercial oligarchy or the professional middle class. In the last century or so it has been they who have largely populated the public schools and kept them vital. It is they, of course, who have invested the most in them, and have the most to lose, but it is not so easily a matter of social mobility, or an imitation of manners, in which case every *maitre d'* would be a public school man *manqué*. It may be that English society is rigid and unyielding, but it is nonetheless steadfast, and it has also the virtue of experience over hope.

How else to perpetuate the State, the Church and the Army? So long as the constituent elements of society are constant, and the structure of society is evolutionary, the public schools have a mission, and, in spite of everything, they seem to have it still. To be sure, they are not what they once were, but as trends have succeeded trends, the public schools have proceeded along at their own simultaneous pace, mindful, in their way, of William of Wykeham's motto that "manners makyth man."

They are unique, and so unique that they have exerted a kind of fascination wholly out of proportion to their significance. The public school idea was imported by Americans in the later 19th century, and it has not traveled well; the imitation, in the form of our native prep schools, has not been a form of flattery. By a desperate copying of the trappings and argot (even, in some cases, the appearance) of public schools, they have somehow managed to miss the essence. The onetime popularity of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* suggests that, so far as America is concerned, the ideal has always outdone the real: there is no local equivalent. Frank Merriwell and Dink Stover were all very well in their way, but they remained characteristically, in fact hopelessly, American. National institutions reflect national character, and public schools could only be English. This is instructive to remember, because there is much about them that is, to an objective eye, inexplicable, and while a foreigner may seek to understand them, he can not in any way comprehend them in that offhand and instinctive fashion in which the English explain themselves.

That, of course, is part of the difference among nationalities, but do public schools reflect well on the English character? What is the point, after all, of using them as a model when they have generated such controversy in their own homeland? It is probably better to say

Tad Szulc

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that they serve as an example, or perhaps even an exhibit, of the lengths to which quirks and custom can invade serious purpose. This is the sort of mutual incomprehension found in political practices: the English find our presidential elections similarly bizarre, but it is a system cherished here, and obviously so, since its methods and practices grow with each post-election resolution to reform the process. So with public schools: in spite of commissions of inquiry and howls of elitism, they flourish and prosper, and in their adjustments and reforms show no signs of apology so much as a kind of half-hearted desire to move with the times. No one, it seems, is flogged anymore, but flogging died by common consent, not legislation.

Lord Faversham jumping at an Eton fire practice. Radio Times Hulton Picture Library.

Public schools have never purported to be anything but their own justification. In spite of their origins in the medieval church and royal foundation, they have never relied upon anything like the need for universal education or the merit principle. What must bother their detractors is that the whole notion of merit is nearly alien to them; the grammar schools fulfill (or fulfilled) that function, and the public schools have existed largely to instill the code of the gentry and near-gentry of England. Not for them the infusion of worthy poor or the teaching of disciplines necessary to a growing economy, etc., etc.—they were based upon those verities of learning and conduct that have served as the common thread of an English liberal education, and to also assure the elect of their standing and responsibilities in the community of gentlemen. Hence, the old school tie, and the association of certain schools with certain universities, or professions. It is interesting that the doctrine of Muscular Christianity did not turn out more philistines than it did. It may be that the few sensitive souls who passed through public schools spent the rest of their days in intellectual atonement, but it could also be said that the demands public schools made upon character and intellect made any subsequent activities seem pleasurable by comparison.

To a remarkable and unconscious extent, they are run by their students. The fag system (student servants) is a nearly perfect microcosm of the tyranny of childhood. Surely there are no crueler people than children—the sense of compassion and indulgence seems to come with maturity; and the public schools, administered by boys and men who think like boys, are a nightmare of sadism, brute force, conformity and snobbery. George Orwell once illustrated this well when he showed that the true test of a boy at school came, not by his masters, but by his peers; the teachers, in fact, seemed to be in a kind of world to themselves. The normal warfare of subject and authority is curiously transformed in the public schools. Much greater delight is taken in fratricidal combat and that, coupled with the exaltation of athletics, the absence of privacy and a kind of mindless pursuit of discomfort, puts the boy to a greater trial than Latin conjugations. Different people react different ways: some thrive, some are permanently injured, the majority seem to come to some sort of terms with the ordeal and learn, if not to enjoy it, at least to profit by it.

It is also an environment in which homosexuality is inevitable and, as it happens, rampant. There is some debate about the pervasion of homosexuality in English ruling circles. Whether or not it is true, and whether it has made much of a difference to history, the public schools must bear some responsibility for it. It is futile to suppose that a large group of boys thrown into close proximity throughout adolescence are not going to suffer sexual pangs of some sort or another—and are unhappily forced by circumstances to look, in some cases, to one another for gratification. Boys' schools have always been refuges for drunks, failures and intellectual shipwrecks as teachers; so too, have they been a safe harbor for homosexuals. And why not? The prospect of an endless succession of good-looking boys eager to curry favor must be a kind of pederastic Eden.

Nor have the great figures—and they abound—ever made much difference, and in some instances they have fostered whatever defects the public schools may have. Dr. Arnold at Rugby and Dr. Keane at Eton may have been dynamic, but the broad tradition of the public schools has always been greater than particular individuals. Even innovations—J.M. Roxburgh's Stowe comes to mind—have introduced some novelties, but in providing alternatives have perpetuated as much as they have changed. Summerhill, long the favorite of reformers and earnest parents full of Rousseau, comes across as a kind of progressive Hell.

The Old School Tie is so full of stories and facts that whatever illumination it offers is incidental. The author has tried to do too much, and by so doing has done little. The book offers a comprehensive view of public school culture, of the names and the places, of the insanity and genius that have been the ingredients of their survival. But an understanding of the public schools requires more history,

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more social history, and an understanding of both, as well as incidental interpretation and funny anecdotes. There is too much, and there is not enough. It is also written in a casual, conversational style that very quickly becomes irritating, always a fatal flaw in a book nearly five hundred pages long. I hesitate to say that solemnity implies authority, but the public schools deserve a little better than this.

Philip Terzian

Philip Terzian is a writer who lives in Washington, DC.

The Radical Will: Selected Writings, 1911-1918 by Randolph Bourne

(Urizen Press; $17.50, $7.95 paper)

Because history is composed of irreversible events the metaphor of a flowing stream is sometimes applied, but not all sorts of history attain this even flow. The units in which and by which we study American cultural history, especially the works of writers, seem to come in terms of decades rather than of canals. Thus we speak of the Nineties, the Twenties, the Sixties, and so on. This would be no more than a chronological convenience, were it not that each such decade seems to erase or diminish the years immediately preceding it, to the distortion of values, a false estimate of talents, and sometimes a total distortion of meaning. Thus American literary history is supposed to have taken a sharp turn in the direction of "modernism" (a perilous term) at the end of World War I. One result is that many forward-looking books published before 1920 like Tom L. Johnson's *My Story* or Robert M. Lafollette's *Autobiography*, novels such as Winston Churchill's *Mr. Crewe's Career*, and Ellen Glasgow's *Virginia*, or the weighty prose of Santayana's five-volume *The Life of Reason* or Charles Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*—all important titles in the decade 1910-1920—lose weight and meaning. The same is true of the poets who created the Poetic Renaissance centering on Harriet Monroe's *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, already mostly old hat.

It is to this decade that Randolph Bourne (1886-1914), a rare spirit in a deformed body, has to be assigned. Neither his personality nor the lucidity of his thought and writing is known in most American classrooms or to many American readers. The present anthology is, I think, the first attempt at a generous and representative collection of his work, much of which originally appeared in *The New Republic*. I am sorry to have to say that the publishers have served him badly. The clarity of Christopher Lasch's six introductory pages is excellent, but the heavy-handed sociological prose of Olaf Hansen's 45-page essay, "Affinity and Ambivalence," does neither the book nor Mr. Bourne any good. Bourne was quite capable of making himself understood. Doubtless the intent of intermingling selections from his printed work with miscellaneous selections from his unpublished manuscripts was honorable, but I find this irregular mingling confusing, not clarifying. A sketch by Van Wyck Brooks in the *Dictionary of American Biography* contains this brief and sufficient statement. Having noted his physical deformity, Brooks goes on to say: "I shall never forget . . . that odd little apparition with his vibrant eyes, his quick, bird-like steps," and to speak of the "radiantly idealistic" essays in *Youth and Life* (1913). Brooks also praises Bourne's moral courage in facing the failure of his youthful pragmatism, a sense of futility heightened by his loss of faith in John Dewey, who urged his followers to get the country into World War I. At the best, intellectuals are but a tiny fraction of any large society; and Bourne had apparently forgotten the observation of Bryce in *The American Commonwealth* that democracies always tend to elect mediocrities. The president of the United States was one Woodrow Wilson, a college president; and Germany throughout the 19th century was the core of European university life. Bourne was no prophet and could not foresee the helplessness of the intellectuals when the airplane turned into an instrument of massacre, the viciousness of unrestricted submarine warfare, nor, at a slightly later date, the rise of Mussolini and Hitler, the slaughter of millions of Jews and Poles, nor the invention of the hydrogen bomb. Of course the intellectuals of the Western world should have stopped this universal blood-letting, but they did not because they could not.

Arthur G. Dove's drawing of Randolph Bourne's death mask. The Granger Collection.

Applauding youth for its enthusiasms, even if unfocused, Bourne devoted a great many words to reform in American education, especially by way of "experimentalism," a term he never precisely defined, much as he owed to Dewey. He seemed to find it regrettable that American education, both primary and secondary, was too strongly imitative of English education—as, it seems, the universities were also. I think his facts were wrong on both the lower and higher level. He seemed to think it regrettable that all young Americans should learn to read and write English, even if they came from "foreign" stock. We have, I think, been a little slow to see that children who do not master English do not make mature American citizens; and the results of a concerted drive to educate them in their "mother" tongue are with us today in the shape of ethnicity, that coarse instrument for splitting the republic into divisive groups and sections. The fact is that most of his hopes and prophecies were wrong. Except for his book on the Gary (Indiana) schools, most of his educational observations were confined to the American Northeast; he neither experienced, nor observed in much detail, the herculean burden of our crowded metropolitan schools, swarming with children, nor the low calibre of much that passes for education in the farm belt. Like other youthful radicals he could never understand that you

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cannot direct great masses of humanity unless you have great forces to back you up. Nor did he understand that eventually Big Business, under government pressure if one wants to say so, could come to the astonishing idea that in the long run some concern for social welfare, health, a pension system, decent housing, insurance for workers, and much else we now take for granted, might be part of the responsibility of making money.

But youthful radiance, youthful reformers and even youthful ignorance can on most occasions be stimulating. His break with Dewey resembles Emerson's break with the church. Bourne could write in the essay entitled "Youth":

> *This is the great divergence which sets youth not only against old age, but against youth itself; the undying spirit of youth that seems to be fed by an unquenchable fire, that does not burn itself out but seems to grow steadier and steadier as life goes on as against the quickly tarnished type that passes listlessly into middle age. At twenty-five I find myself full of the wildest radicalisms, and look with dismay at my childhood friends who are already settled down, have achieved babies and responsibilities, and have somehow got ten years beyond me in a day. And this divergence shows itself in a thousand different ways. It may be a temptation to a world of pleasure, it may be a sheltering from the stimulus of ideas or even a sluggish temperament, that separates traditional and adventurous youth but fundamentally it is a question of how youth takes the world. And here I find I can no longer drag the traditional youth with me in this paper. There are many of him, I know, and I do not like him, and I know nothing about him. Let us rather look at the way radical youth grows into and meets the world.*

Impractical? Yes. Visionary? Yes. Inspiriting? Emphatically yes. I doubt that Shelley could have managed an iron factory, but the steel plants of today are compelled to look after their employees as they never were a century or more ago, all because of the Shelleys of this world. We have had no such writing as Bourne's since that famous day in August, 1837, when Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke before the president and gentlemen of Harvard College what Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes called "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." Just before he ended Emerson said: "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak with our own minds." Perhaps we have too easily forgotten Randolph Bourne.

Howard Mumford Jones

Howard Mumford Jones won a Pulitzer Prize in 1964 for *O Strange New World: American Culture, the Formative Years.*

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Selected Stories by V.S. Pritchett

(Random House; $10)

I think I should say at once that there is nothing really new about the collection of 14 short stories by V.S. Pritchett just published by Random House as *Selected Stories.* The pieces have appeared previously in other collections, or as part of the novel, *The Key to My Heart,* and they offer a pleasantly familiar view into the row-house penuries of post-war England, the store-front lecheries of pre-war Paris, the loneliness caged inside city apartments, and the loneliness driving pell-mell down country lanes pursuing inane dreams of love and vengeance. There is a whiff of P.G. Wodehouse about some of those pieces. One is amazed at the prevalence of the happy ending. Or the prevalence, at least, of what looks at first sight like an old-fashioned case of incurable hopefulness.

Disarmingly restful stuff. Deceptively restful. I remember sitting in San Spirito with sore feet gave me rather the same sense of peace and reassurance that these stories do; a sense that, thank God, Brunelleschi had worked it all out so marvelously that there was no need for me to try to appreciate how marvelously worked out it was. The complexity of impossible perspectives had been raised not just to a level of mathematical and architectural genius, but to a level of comfort. It was nice just sitting there. Pritchett's stories have that duality, too. They are complex and comfortable, works of genius which pretend no further than entertainment. They seem to focus on the fine texture of the surface of things, exactly and rather humbly described. But they look into an interior much larger than this might seem to imply, much more difficult, more filled with mysteries.

Take the first story, "The Diver," which, on the face of it, is no more than a charming description of the narrator's sexual initiation under the tutelage of Mme. Chamson, owner of a cleaning and mending establishment in Paris. Mme. Chamson is vivid: "She had sinfully tinted hair built up high over arching, exclaiming eyebrows, hard as varnish and when she got near the door there was always a joke coming out of the side of her mouth." In the course of events, the narrator inadvertently learns to see through this masking persona, to the "soft, ordinary, decent woman," underneath. The child, which is dazzled and frightened by the appearance of the female painted for sexual encounter, grows into the young man, able to savor her essence, her carnality.

Were that all, it would be enough. But buried inside this simple story of a first seduction, there is another story which informs it and plays in counterpoint. The narrator wants to be a writer; but only when he is practicing his French do the stories in his head come alive, "often," he says, "in the subjunctive." He sees Paris as a city dedicated to sex, and he needs a politely equivocating mode to relate to it and of it. As his French improves, Paris, he says, gets worse, as though language and sexual understanding had some sort of logical relationship. And so, indeed, they do; for it becomes evident that the explicit act of intercourse contains a variety of implicit possibilities of violence and violation, ranging from murder to betrayal, from imagined fears and expectations to the real struggle for dominance and self-protection. The best way to deal with this complicated state of affairs turns

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out to be by changing it into fiction. The boy invents a tale about a sweet-shop lady murdered by a laundry man. It is full of splendidly irrelevant detail, embroidered lavishly with neo-realistic *non sequiturs*. It transforms the domineering Mme. Chamson to the role of victim, while it raises her victim to potency once more. "Kill me. Kill me," says Mme. Chamson, in ecstasy, as the boy enacts, with her encouragement, the role of lover in fact, the role of laundryman in fantasy, and the role of storyteller in embryo.

There is a sort of chemical interchange in most of these stories between art and act, life and fiction. Like the boy's story in "The Diver," the inspired invention of tragic love in "The Chain-smoker" includes enough of life's paradoxes to make some sense of it, and push it in the right direction. Life, in Pritchett's fiction, needs all the help it can get, and art, whether it is embodied in the serious paintings of fish and females in "The Skeleton" or the poster of the Argentine stewardess in "Noisy in the Doghouse," tends to serve a lively and moral function. In "When My Girl Comes Home" it is Mr. Gloster's book which has the last word, and which defines the impasse, between the story's young adventuress and the family to whom she has briefly returned, as caused not by her Byzantine life, but by their distorted and fragmented vision. Even in their most fallen form, fiction, invention, lies and art offer a sort of commentary and clarification in these stories, just as, in a larger dimension, of course, the stories themselves offer their own commentary and clarification of life.

Underlying the simple narrative, the quite familiar setting, the exactly textured description of how people look and behave, is the suggestion of wildly tangled contradiction. Pritchett's stories are full of mysteries and the unexplained fragments of relationships, which we are asked to intuit rather than understand. His characters come to us reflected through what other people expect of them, refracted by mistakes they make about themselves, complicated by greed and lust and, above all, their own fantasy constructions of what the scene demands. Blank, stony faces, like the blind man's in "Blind Love," do not indicate callowness, but isolation and the inexpressible quality of experience and feeling. But changes of expression are notable and noted, small shards which may reveal the hidden process going on underneath. Money and things are enormously important, the island tips of unrevealed continents of emotion; they are the counters which people exchange in lieu of feeling, or the treasures which they protect as the only speakable aspects of their own ineffable vulnerabilities.

To an extraordinary degree, Pritchett has the ability to describe irrational behavior and perversity of character as daily, ordinary and quite unremarkable facts of human existence, at the same time that he suggests an almost biological impulse in his characters to transcend their own paradoxical natures and reach out to each other.

Communication is, at best, difficult; any approach to love seems to demand a plunge into an alien element: water in "The Diver" and "Blind Love," darkness in "The Marvellous Girl," and drink and sleep in the two stories about lonely old age, "The Spree" and "The Skeleton." Encounters between the sexes are apt to take place in another country, a magic Other World which can be reached only by crossing a sort of boundary to a haven sometimes literally abroad: Italy in

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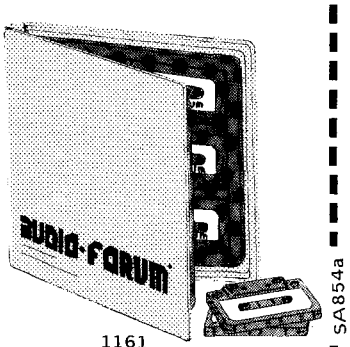

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"Blind Love," "across the water" in "When My Girl Comes Home"; though in "The Spree" peace is as close as Brighton. Not everyone, of course, reaches that promised land. In "The Wheelbarrow," for instance, the past of the mineworker who has struggled from "sin" to his present life of fire-breathing evangelist is antithetical to the privileged, barren life of the unbeliever he is working for. They are sexually drawn to each other, but temperamentally and historically they are at odds. Yet even their brief approach is poignant, and in other stories the sense of isolation shattered by affection is quite wonderful. Especially, for me, in "Blind Love," where the joining of two blemished halves into a perfect whole has the effect of magic.

Not only divided from each other, Pritchett's characters are sometimes more seriously divided in themselves. The young accountant of "The Fall" has to "assemble" himself in mirrors and in the eyes of others. The heroine of "Blind Love" has a birthmark which she sees as the property of a fallen, passionate, wrong-minded rebel against her own practical persona. In "The Cage Birds" a golden dress transforms the mean, drab young mother into an unrealized potential of herself. And in "The Camberwell Beauty" a girl writes half her name in the dust, and by her action suggests that hers is only half a life.

But not necessarily the wrong half of a life. Or even, for that matter, a half which is necessarily less than the whole. In the commonplace, generally decent lives led by the people in these stories, sorting out values can be a very tricky business. And though Pritchett's birthmark and golden dress recall the blemishes and black veils of Hawthorne's sober legends, they serve a very different function than Hawthorne's visible symbols of universal and natural law. Like money in "The Key to My Heart" and luggage in "When My Girl Comes Home," they exist as flotsam and jetsam from some great, unseen, indescribable storm, which has risen to the surface and is briefly available for examination and interpretation by the characters, the author and ourselves. The characters react to their blemished or golden selves as to different people; and Pritchett suggests the depths of the symbiosis between essence and appearance, that relationship between what is seen and acted upon, and what simply is.

The stories seem to me quite fortunately selected—the cover suggests by Pritchett himself—to include everything from the bleak London of "The Cage Birds" to the surreal search of "The Camberwell Beauty," as well as the three stories from *The Key to My Heart*, which are a very light, very broad, rather admiring glance by an enterprising young tradesman into the declining world of Bertie Wooster. It is a broad spectrum, as befits a man who began life veering between a Yorkshire accent and Cockney, and crowned it with a knighthood. Despite his confession of extroversion in *A Cab at the Door*, and his complaints of a childhood which neglected the poetic imagination and the "inner life," these are stories which so delicately suggest the unseen, inner core by its shadow cast against the visible outside surface, that they succeed not only as works of fiction but as achievements of a profoundly poetic imagination.

Edith Milton

Edith Milton is a novelist and short story writer.

ROBIN W. WINKS ON MYSTERIES

Stained Glass
by William F. Buckley, Jr.
(Doubleday; $8.95)

The Enemy
by Desmond Bagley
(Doubleday; $7.95)

Risk
by Dick Francis
(Harper & Row; $8.95)

The Poison People
by William Haggard
(Cassell; £3.95)

Thin Air
by William Marshall
(Holt, Rinehart; $6.95)

McGarr on the Cliffs of Moher
by Bartholomew Gill
(Scribner's; $8.95)

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by Brian Ball
(Walker; $7.95)

Murder R.F.D.
by Leslie Stephan
(Scribner's; $8.95)

Dewey Decimated
by Charles A. Goodrum
(Crown; $7.95)

The Judas Pair
by Jonathan Gash
(Harper & Row; $8.95)

Eighty Dollars to Stamford
by Lucille Fletcher
(Penguin; $1.95)

The Annotated Sherlock Holmes
edited by William S. Baring-Gould
(2 vols., Clarkson Potter; $29.95)

"Reviewers, with some rare exceptions, are a most stupid and malignant race." Thus Shelley. Perhaps being able to reveal one's malignant view of the world only quarterly is helpful to the reviewer, for these last three months have brought an unusual number of books about which one may reasonably feel kind. Eleven of them deserve attention here. The astute reader will detect that 12 are under review, a jury presiding over the quarter sessions, and the twelfth is included—despite a standing injunction to myself not to waste space on the purely bad, best passed over in silence—because it is so perfect an example of why my wife, among others, thinks all mystery fiction is trash; one must view it as a kind of historical document, a fly in amber reminding us how far detective fiction has come.

It has come far enough to embrace political philosophy in the person of William F. Buckley Jr., that essayist,

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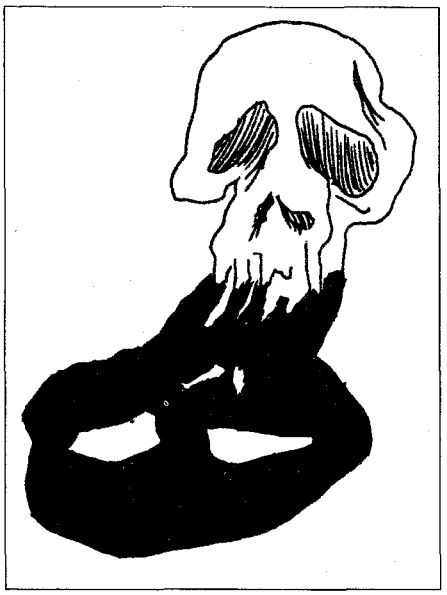
columnist, hymnodist of all things conservative, in his second thriller, *Stained Glass*. The first, *Saving the Queen*, was replete with ambiguity, irony, suspense—all those qualities we



Drawing by András Goldinger

associate with Ambler, Greene, le Carre and company—and yet it put forward by example an argument about loyalty and guilt which was, to this reviewer, thoroughly convincing. Now Buckley advances his argument a further step, and onto more dangerous ground. Blackford Oakes, handsome Yale graduate, who bedded the Queen of England in the line of duty (for the CIA), must become a true friend of the Count Axel Wintergrin, mirror-image of Oakes, German hero who fought with the Norwegian resistance against the Nazis, scion of a great family, and the only political figure in a divided Germany who is actively (and quite possibly successfully) working to reunite East Germany with West. It is 1952, the United States fears Stalin, who has asked for Wintergrin's head, and France and Britain prefer not to rock the Adenauer boat. As a cover, Oakes is placed in Wintergrin's household to superintend the restoration of the fabled chapel of St. Anselm, the masterwork of Meister Gerard that has been destroyed by the allies and is now to be made whole again with Marshall aid. The trickiest task in the reconstruction will be to get precisely right the colors in the stained glass, for which a complex chromoscope is used. Buckley's equally tricky task is to lead Oakes into carrying out his orders yet free him of direct guilt while betraying the possibility of a united Germany because of the combination of cowardice, *realpolitik*, and love of country displayed by two graphically depicted figures, Allen Dulles and Dean Acheson. As Dulles tells Oakes, ". . . in this world, if you let them, the ambiguists will kill you." All is ambiguity, all contributes to forwarding Buckley's analysis of a time when a truly bold West might have broken through the stranglehold Stalin had laid upon the Cold War, yet all is realistic in its conclusion that ultimately one must take action rather than wait for all of the facts, the options, the moral judgments to be in: "I *don't* believe the lesson to draw is that we *must not* act because, in acting, we may *prove* to be wrong." This is Dulles again, and while the action belongs to Oakes, the book belongs to Dulles.

Buckley has remarked that he would have liked to have called this chilling, compelling book "Detente." The title would have been apt, for while *Stained Glass* is about the past, its attitudes are for today. If history is philosophy teaching by example, this novel is a work of history, for it parallels those options that might well have been open to the West in the long ago years when, had boldness been our friend the world might today be vastly different—and when another form of boldness helped determine our present condition. One suspects Buckley intends to carry us, through the eyes of Oakes, from the seemingly clear perceptions of right and wrong of the Cold War years to our own muddy days, unraveling his ever more complex political views as he goes. At least I hope so, for *Stained Glass* is closer to the bone than le Carre has ever cut.

Desmond Bagley cuts no less closely, although a different bone. Here is a writer who has grown visibly with every book, and *The Enemy* is in most ways his best. Were one to apply wine terminology to thrillers, this one would deserve the cliché "crackling." It involves the real frightener of the late 1970s, DNA research, and it is yet another examination of The Way We Have Been Lied To by our national leaders. The leaders this time are British, the scene is Southeast England, Scotland, and Sweden, and the fact that a few men (and women) retain their sense of decency is all that stands between ourselves and The Enemy. The book was originally published in England where "We have met the enemy, and he is us," that most famous statement of that most famous subversive sociological cartoonist, Walt Kelly, may be less well known. In either country the message is loud and clear. And there are dividends: a chase reminiscent of John Buchan, an ingenuous code, derring-do with computers, and an inverse sleeper. Bagley puts his foot wrong only once: he appears to think that Pogo actually has only one leg.

Bagley has long since become one of the Old Dependables. Another is Dick Francis, and in *Risk* he is fully back in stride after two disappointing books. As always, horse racing is essential to the puzzle, the bad guys are without redemption, the good girl is a sweetie, the hero shows incredible endurance, and the dialogue is true to the ear. Viewed in this way, *Risk* is something of a compound of clichés, but it is a mixture much to the liking of many, and the expertise that is always present in a Dick Francis novel—this time about tax dodges among the horsey set—is fascinating. Any Francis addict need only be told there is a new book at hand; anyone who has yet to discover him would do well to start with this one.

Yet another Old Dependable is at hand, making this report sound like the muster of the Queen's Old Regiment. William Haggard is a favorite here, a thoroughgoing professional who writes as he wishes to, convincingly, cleverly,

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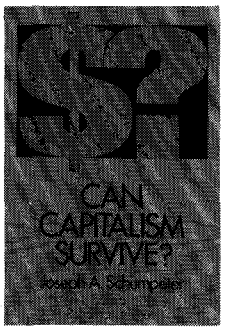

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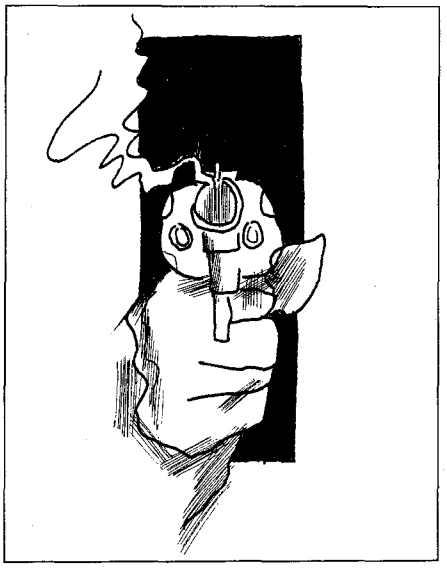
and with acid. His last thriller, *Yesterday's Enemy*, was published by Walker and Company, and as usual it carried Colonel Russell, retired from Security Executive, through another inquiry into the realities of international politics. Walker appears (a telephone call to its publicity director reveals) to be unaware of Haggard's latest, *The Poison People*, and to have no intention of publishing it in America, so one will have to ferret it out from the British publisher. It is well worth ferreting. Russell is in the thick of it again, this time working to break a drug ring centered in Delhi. The title refers to the drug merchants, but it also reflects Haggard's attitude toward diplomats who misuse their positions and foreigners in Britain who abuse British hospitality. Haggard has been accused of being a snob, and in a sense he is, of the best kind: he expects people to behave themselves, is not surprised that they do not, and is not afraid to say that it is often the temporary sojourner with no stake in the society to which he has gone who is most likely to overstep those bounds of convention that the society has worked out through generations of *their* trial and error. The sloppy reader may think this book anti-Indian in the way other sloppy readers have thought Haggard anti-Italian or anti-American; close readers will take his meaning, for Russell, when traveling in India, never forgets that he is a foreigner, staying in an English-owned, English-run egg-and-bacony hotel named the Weybridge. It is too bad Walker doesn't know a good thing when it arrives on a platter.

Happily there are those who do. Holt, Rinehart now gives us William Marshall's fourth Yellowthread Street mystery, *Thin Air*. In case you have come in late, Yellowthread Street is in the worst section of Hong Kong, and Marshall's books are about an unlikely team of police, European, Chinese, even American, who stumble toward solutions to multiple crimes which usually prove to be linked. Marshall's first two books, *Yellowthread Street* and *The Hatchet Man*, emphasized blood and gore, the Keystone Cops characteristics of the police, and the repetitive, often inane conversations between the bored, the inattentive, and the dull. I didn't like them. Then the redoubtable Dilys Winn convinced me to try again, and with *Thin Air* I am a convert. The hints at condescension, the Australian overtones (not a country of which I am overly fond), and the graphically described blood-letting have been toned down, the writing is under control, and the element of mystery is genuine. The case here involves the murder of all 57 passengers aboard a charter flight from Hong Kong to Tokyo, the subsequent demand for ransom lest other flights be similarly wiped out—and with them, Hong Kong's tourist economy—and the



Drawing by András Goldinger

overt racism of the British policeman charged with Kai Tak security. Marshall is like James McClure, who writes of South Africa, in that the plots evolve out of a shrewd observation of the realities of race relations in Britain's last Far Eastern colony (yes! the Solomon Islands are independent next month).

Not to flog a phrase to death, but another Old Dependable is on the way: Bartholomew Gill (a patent pseudonym, that), creator of McGarr, Chief Inspector of Detectives of the Irish police. *McGarr on the Cliffs of Moher* is the third tale. It was preceded by *McGarr and the Politician's Wife* and *McGarr and the Sienese Conspiracy*, and like the early Nicholas Freelings, these grow upon one. The pace is relaxed, the clues are planted with almost stodgy care, the author's intelligence is evident throughout, and Ireland comes alive, bit by bit. McGarr will not keep one up all night but he will not let one loose either (even more so his charming wife). In the *Cliffs of Moher* McGarr is inevitably caught up in the IRA, in the murder of an Irish-American girl who has returned Home for what soon are seen to be devious reasons, and in the pubs of County Clare. This is reading that requires a bit of the old Paddy at hand and a crackling fire, not a beach. As the reviewer's (or Shelley's) possibly stupid cliché has it, Gill is a writer to watch.

So too is Brian Ball, although he has further to go. *Montenegrin Gold* appears to be his first thriller, following in the wake of much science fiction. The first half is very good indeed. The resolution of the problem so cleanly created is exceedingly weak. The problem: an employee of Combined Electrical who has been something of an efficiency expert is eased out of his job, loses his wife and home, and ultimately his son and his self-respect. All that is left to him is his slow discovery that his late father was not the dreary soul he had thought him to be, for the unearthing of his father's wartime diaries reveals that he was in counter-intelligence in Yugoslavia. Now the Yugoslav People's Institute for Historical Research appears to want these diaries, which seem unrevealing as history, very badly indeed. Echoes of the Partisans and the Ustasha arise, and so long as the action remains in England, it is convincing. Then our hero tethers himself out as a goat, the chase moves to Yugoslavia, and the author can think of little to do but run cars up and down mountains and have various people shoot various other people. It is all too bad but it is also a start.

Some other debuts are a bit more consistent. Leslie Stephan, in *Murder R.F.D.*, tells us of trouble that develops just outside a small Massachusetts town, when an ill-assorted group of people try their collective hands at returning to the soil. We meet Sergeant Dave Putnam, who is not sophisticated but who thinks clearly, and one can bet that he will be back. We meet a number of likely murderers and victims, and eventually we get something of each. The plotting is careful, the pace unforced, and the style pleasant. Ms. Stephan brings a Radcliffe B.A. (*cum laude*) to all this, which is O.K., and it looks as though Scribner's—which also bet its shirt on the aforementioned McGarr—knows what it is doing.

Expertise always helps, of course. Charles Goodrum brings a lot of knowledge about libraries to *Dewey Decimated*, as punny a title as we are likely to get this side of the Library of Congress. Someone is throwing doubts on the authenticity of the rare books in Washington's most famous library (here disguised as the Werner-Bok). Librarians are being petty, vicious with each other. Strange things are going on in the bindery, in the stacks, and perhaps in the front office. Murder is done, and a consultant is brought in, naturally, from the Yale Library to unravel the mess. He does, romance blooms, the rather obvious villain is found out, the reader is given a good bit of knowledge about

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library science through sleight of hand, and everyone fades away into the night, with yet other libraries no doubt awaiting rescue from the hands of Yale's own (Blackford Oakes, perhaps, now past his prime?).

Expertise is also what buoys up Jonathan Gash's *The Judas Pair*, although this time it is about another form of Oldies but Goodies, antiques. The Judas Pair are antique duelling pistols which possibly do not exist. Lovejoy, of Lovejoy Antiques, is given the commission of finding them. His chatter is constant, his morals very much those of someone hooked on situational ethics, his life style a bit grotty. But one learns a great deal about the antiques trade, information nicely bootlegged between clues, including a few tricks Jonathan Gash's antique friends may wish he had kept to himself. More wanted.

As for that fly in amber, here is the Good Bad Book of the decade. Not in so many years have I read so silly, so badly written, so inherently disabled a book as *Eighty Dollars to Stamford*, by Lucille Fletcher (who brought us *Sorry, Wrong Number*!). Here mothers-in-law have X-ray eyes, all tears drop hotly onto cheeks, and the unpleasant hero (if such a dodo can be called that) stumbles around compounding every mistake beyond recall. Mysterious blondes slide in and out, crystal chandeliers glitter, a malevolent Dr. Wolfgang Corvo appears to pursue said hero, and the whole farrago of nonsense piles upon itself ever higher, each chapter in even more breathlessly bad taste than the last. The suspense is unbearable. This is the book to give to your friends to convince them that you are wasting your time when you read detective fiction, so that they will stay away from your collection.

How nice to end on a pleasant note. Clarkson Potter has reissued *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. This consists of the four novels and the 56 short stories, complete, with an introduction, fascinating notes, and a bibliography by William S. Baring-Gould, many maps, diagrams, photographs, and even coats-of-arms. Everything is here, and if there is one book on Holmes to have, it is this one. The price, for two massive volumes, makes it the steal of the year. And no doubt that is the right note on which to end a quarterly report on detective fiction.

Robin W. Winks

Robin W. Winks, mystery chronicler for *TNR*, teaches history at Yale.

Brief Reviews

My Soul is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered by Howell Raines

(Putnam's; $12.95)

The title comes from a story told by Martin Luther King Jr. about an elderly black woman, a participant in the 1956 Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott. King told the woman that it would be all right for her to go back to riding the buses because she was too old to keep walking. When she insisted that she would see the boycott through like everyone else, King asked, "But aren't your feet tired?"

"Yes," she replied, "but my soul is rested."

Some stories are best told in the words of those who actually lived them, and in the skilled hands of Howell Raines, the courage of word and deed of those who spearheaded the civil rights movement from the Montgomery boycott to the assassination of King in Memphis in April, 1968, is one such story. The span of time seems right—more than a decade has elapsed since the events recalled here took place—a duration sufficient to enrich reminiscences with a perspective on what was accomplished and what remains yet to be done.

The interviews range from the famous—James Farmer, Julian Bond, John Lewis, Bayard Rustin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Andrew Young and Ralph Abernathy—to sharecroppers, parents whose children were killed in bombings, journalists, ministers, lawyers, southern cops and government lawmen from Washington, university students, schoolchildren and black street hustlers who formed behind the civil rights barricades. There is also a representative series of latter-day testimonials from die-hard oppositionists like Imperial Wizard Bobby Shelton, the Deep South's best known Klansman, from Citizens' Council organizer Robert Patterson and J.B. Stoner, who went to court as late as 1974 to establish his right to use the word nigger in television ads for his campaign as the "white racist candidate" for lieutenant governor of Georgia.

Anyone who lived through the period can read this book to recall, as Julian Bond put it, "how much a better people we were then." And, stumbling across the Pattersons, Sheltons and Stoners, how much indeed still remains to be done.

Ken Bode

The Pursuit of Happiness and Other Sobering Thoughts by George F. Will

(Harper & Row; $10.95)

It will not, I think, be said of any other journalist writing in our time that he has written, more or less consistently for—well, if not quite for eternity, then for the future. Surely no one else but George Will could bring together nearly 150 quite recent newspaper and magazine articles with as much confidence that they make an illuminating whole. It is not that his is a settled doctrine. Conservatism in this regard is

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hardly a less disputed intellectual or moral jurisdiction than liberalism. But Will's disposition is bounded by clear, mostly traditional ethical dos and don'ts, both public and private. He is almost never an enthusiast for those momentary fashions and strange gods that have engaged others who ply what is erroneously thought the same trade.

That is not all that distinguishes Will from the rest of even the most uncommon columnists, a small lot in any case. Unlike his colleagues, Will does not write about the day's news, or the week's. The news may occasion his articles but it does not define them. Although he obviously works hard at ferreting out information, Will respects his readers too much to confide to them the ephemera he has been leaked at breakfast, whispered at lunch, slipped at cocktails. To say that Will writes "think pieces," though, is to trivialize them. He is a writer giving thought, which is different—and far more important. And it is more important because he knows what is genuinely worth observation and comment, and how to treat what is just the fluff and chaff of communal life. To these certainly he is not exactly indifferent. He has the capacity for scorn, fueled less by malice than by an aversion to cant. That aversion, however, is not much shared these days. Cant, in fact, is the vernacular of the public discourse, the mode of politician, *feuilletonist* and celebrity alike. Which just about covers the cast of those who influence and matter. Even when we disagree with him, which may be less than one would think, George Will is a great and rare exception.

Martin Peretz

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Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army
by Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage
(Hill and Wang; $10)

After several years of collecting data and reading charts, the authors reached the conclusion that the American army is not the German army. They decided that it isn't the British army, either, or the French army or the Israeli army or the Roman army. What distinguishes our army from these others is that our soldiers don't take orders and our officers don't like to go into battle. The authors—both ex-officers themselves—base their findings on a meticulous study of official Vietnam war records. They were staggered by the statistics on fraggings (assassinations of officers), mutinies, refusals to go into combat, desertions and the high incidence of drug addiction and corruption. They found that officers were being commissioned so rapidly that they were cramped by the narrow confines of the war. At one point there were 110 generals in Vietnam, 64 of them from the army. The officer corps was "bloated in number and poor in quality." As a group, officers rarely exposed themselves to fire, and when they did, they automatically won decorations. A study of the medal awards revealed that as the frequency and intensity of the fighting declined, the "number of awards, many for bravery, actually increased at an astonishing rate." By the end of the war, 15 percent of the army was made up of officers. In contrast, when Germany went to war in 1939, the officers made up 2.86 percent of the army. That percentage dropped off as the war went on because German officers, unlike the Americans in Vietnam, tended to risk their lives more than the enlisted men.

General Westmoreland, one learns, was the master of a large and confused circus in Vietnam. The authors put the blame for the mess not on a weak-willed society, as generals are wont to do, but on the army itself. Its leaders made several stupid decisions after World War II. It began when General George C. Marshall decided to use the technique of big business management in the military. Things got worse when Robert McNamara bustled into the Pentagon with his computers and whiz kids. The deterioration of morale has continued steadily, the authors say, and now the army has been almost entirely taken over by businesslike boobs and opportunists. Careerism is the bane of military excellence, because it encourages weaseling. The good careerists now in charge of the army don't know how to lead or how to teach others to lead. They only know the art of self-promotion, something that has little use on the battlefield. The authors think the army high command should be swept away into retirement and replaced with a noble warrior class and a noble code of ethics.

The book is compelling in its indictment of the army. But it indulges in one wild fantasy: it imagines that Americans would actually prefer a Prussian army to the oafish bureaucracy we have now.

Eliot Marshall

The Antitrust Paradox
by Robert H. Bork
(Basic; $18)

Since the 19th century the Detroit Edison Company has been giving away free light bulbs to its customers, but last month the United States Supreme Court ordered it to stop. Lawyers for a local druggist persuaded the court that the free bulb program was a "tying arrangement" in violation of the antitrust laws, and illegally deprived him of the chance to sell bulbs in his store. The druggist gets nothing out of the case except for a lot of bad publicity and a few pennies in bulb sales; his lawyers will get at least $690,000 from Detroit Edison, ultimately to be paid for by electric

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customers (along with the company's own legal expenses in defending the suit). Of course the Detroit Edison program wasn't really "free," and it did give the electric company a local monopoly on light bulbs. But it cost only two dollars a year per customer, which is considerably less than Detroiters will now have to pay for bulbs. This suggests that the savings in efficiency from this "free" distribution system were greater than whatever monopoly profits the electric company was squeezing from customers by forcing them to take bulbs with their electricity.

Robert H. Bork, the former solicitor general now returned to Yale Law School, argues that the complex web of legal doctrine that the courts have woven out of the antitrust laws (which themselves comprise only a few vague sentences) has stifled productivity and even competition itself, and ended up costing consumers far more in efficiency than it saves them in preventing monopoly profits.

Bork's book is another broadside in the new conservative offensive in public policy writing. (Martin Anderson's *Welfare* and Jude Wanniski's *The Way The World Works* are other recent examples.) These books get their strength from close reasoning and detailed prescription. They seek to persuade not with rhetoric but with fact and analysis. The prevailing tone is sweet reasonableness, with a dash of condescension. All these interfering government policies, goes the implied criticism, were made by liberals with their heads in the clouds. There is a grain of truth in this criticism, and it is the job of those who still do believe the government can be an aggressive instrument of social reform to answer the neoconservatives on their own serious analytical level.

Bork goes through the various kinds of business activity held to violate the antitrust laws—mergers, market divisions, resale price maintenance, exclusive dealing contracts—and shows to his own satisfaction that they are harmless or even beneficial. He places great stock in diagrams of intersecting curves. "It is a common misconception that a monopolist's increased efficiency redounds only to the monopolist's benefit," runs a typical argument. "Figure 3 should dispel that notion." He advocates the elimination of almost all antitrust constraints on business behavior except for explicit price-fixing between competitors.

Michael Kinsley

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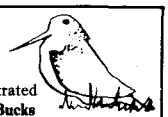

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Washington Diarist

Dissolve the People

Everyone has a favorite totalitarian regime. Zbigniew Brzezinski's is China. But he has not chosen it out of sentiment, which distinguishes his romance from George McGovern's befuddled rapture for Castro. The truth is that Zbig does not much trust the politics of a democracy. This is why he and a key aide, my Harvard colleague Sam Huntington, who has written about his own dread of democracy, felt free to share with top Chinese officials two national policy statements that have not yet been shared with the American people. The first of these documents is the Carter administration's overall appraisal of the world situation; the second describes its security policies. Brzezinski, no doubt, has good professional reasons for keeping us in the dark about matters affecting our destiny. (All of his predecessors had those reasons too and precedent, it appears, is justification.) He must also have a sound explanation for confiding these secrets to the Chinese. It's all meant, I suppose, to scare the Russians, which I doubt it will—though it might well upset the Japanese and our other Pacific allies. Chairman Brezhnev may not relish Zbig huddling with Chairman Hua Kuo-feng, but the huddle is not likely to make him quake in his boots as they tromp through Africa. And if the occasion for Russian adventurism were to arise soon in Europe, we should not expect Moscow to forego temptation simply because our country has teamed up with a regime whose prime achievement still, after more than a whole generation in unchallenged power, is that it feeds its people, just barely.

"Are we underrating Andrew Young?" I sure hope so, said I to myself, eagerly reading Marquis Childs's answer in the *Post* to that tantalizing question about a good and old friend. Alas not. From time to time, Young utters some bold (though not often wise) words about foreign policy, and is made to eat them on the morrow. He repeats them again, however, until everyone stops paying attention. Now his remarks are recorded in places like the *Times*'s "Notes on People" and similar spaces other papers reserve for trivia. A recent instance: Ambassador Young volunteered a few days ago that Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat is "the most popular man in the United States, bar none, including President Carter, unfortunately." Unfortunately also, Young offered no evidence for this startling assertion. *Ex cathedra* silliness is by now his mark. Of course, he would have been right had he said that Sadat is the most popular man in Egypt. That's been proven beyond doubt: 98.29 percent of Egyptians voting have bestowed dictatorial powers on their president, a gift which, in tyrannies from Nicaragua to Czechoslovakia, is equated with authentic, even spontaneous popularity. I wonder why popular leaders like Sadat still rely on techniques of dictatorship.

The mass deportation may be the distinctive political cruelty of the 20th century. It has evolved from simply a tragic rout in wartime to a calculated act of social policy, carried out by rulers against ruled, the willful against the innocent, the ideologically armed against those who want only to live and be let alone—not apparently a recognized right. Misfits, dissidents, the ethnically misplaced and socially mismatched were marched to the gulags in the Ukraine, in Soviet Georgia, in Siberia; Jews by the millions and gypsies too, throughout Europe; Indians in Brazil; black tribes most of us can't even name across Africa, and not only by force of the white gangster regime in Pretoria. In Democratic Kampuchea (remembered perhaps as Cambodia) the brazen spectacle of uprooting and deportation goes on, scarcely noticed, let alone protested (certainly not in the United Nations). To some, uprooting is progress: sad possibly, but progress and necessity nonetheless. China supports her Khmer ally in its expulsion of populations and destruction of their pasts. China has deported and extinguished cultures and classes itself (though you can bet that Brzezinski did not raise the human rights issue of the Tibetans, let's say, with his hosts and new friends in Peking). But now suddenly the Chinese are troubled by deportations: of ethnic Chinese by the Vietnamese, the enemies of the Cambodians. The Russians support the Vietnamese, of course, and may even have instructed them in building a new social order by resettling 10 million people, of which the local one million Chinese are the most nettlesome and therefore the most expendable, therefore also best expelled. There are other ironies to the choler of People's China: the Vietnamese are confiscating the wealth of a bourgeoisie which happens to be Chinese. Intolerable, says Peking. Revolutionary logic, says Hanoi. All over, peoples are in disfavor with their governments. It's a common circumstance. In June 1953, for example, the workers of East Berlin rose futilely against their Communist tribunes. Brecht—on the lam from HUAC and Hollywood, and likening himself to a doctor with penicillin enough to cure but one syphilitic, the old lecher or the pregnant whore—had made his choice and gone to East Germany. But he had to report that in his new home "the government had lost its confidence in the people." Perhaps, he wrote, "the government should dissolve its people and choose itself another."

Armand Hammer, MD, is chairman of the Occidental Petroleum Corporation. He's got favorite tyrannies of his own. One is Libya, whose crazed Colonel Qaddafi returns the favor. It's a very lucrative relationship both ways, but it's a relatively new one and probably without the wistful sentiment that characterizes Hammer's involvements with the Soviet Union. It was, after all, Lenin himself who counseled Hammer to forsake medicine for capitalism, shrewd advice as it turned out. Hammer has made billions, bolstering the Soviet economy along the way, except when Stalin ran Hammer out and the economy into the ground. The Russians are grateful for his fealty to them and to the dollar: they've now decorated the petrochemical tycoon with "The Order of Friendship Among Peoples." It will be years before the president of Pepsi-Cola is similarly honored. Hammer has reciprocated the multiple kindnesses of his business partners by keeping silent about human rights violations in the Soviet Union. "I have enough to do to look after my business without looking after political matters." Fallen physician that he is, he did involve himself, however, in the case of Jessica Katz, who at seven and a half months weighs just 14 pounds, due to a rare disease preventing her from absorbing normal nourishment. The child's parents want her sent to the United States to receive treatment widely available here but not in the Soviet Union. Hammer volunteered that the baby was receiving competent, conscientious medical care in Russia. But if that's so, I wonder why he also offered to fly an American doctor to Moscow to treat her there. For Jessica to leave Russia would be an admission of Soviet failure in an area where they claim great success. Dr. Hammer has justified making a "refusenik" of another infant.

M.P.

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Business and the rational mind, Part IV

Liberals, logical allies of business•The snobbery factor•A plea for independent thinking

We cannot, for the life of us, understand why so many liberals in this country are so hostile to private business, when in our opinion they should be working with business to achieve what should be their basic objectives.

Liberals have been among the prime movers in the enactment of much of this country's social legislation—Aid to Dependent Children, Social Security, housing for the poor and the elderly, school lunches, and other programs. All of these programs have to be financed by revenues derived mainly from taxes on individual and corporate income.

The greater these incomes—which is to say, the more prosperous American business is—the greater the tax revenues. When incomes drop, as in a recession, so do tax revenues. Social programs then have to be reduced accordingly or supported by deficit financing, which over any extended period means inflation. For the poor and for people living on fixed incomes, inflation is the cruelest tyranny of all.

It therefore would seem to us that in all logic liberals should be as pro-business as they are pro-social progress. And we believe many more of them would be if it were not so fashionable intellectually to be part of the "trendy left." Too many of them respond unthinkingly to social and academic pressures rather than engaging in clear, independent analysis.

Part of the problem appears to be snobbery, pure and simple. To many of what might be called the professional liberals, business—indeed, our whole industrial society—is impossibly vulgar. To some it is esthetically offensive. And because business can prosper only by serving the masses of people, some consider it unbearably plebeian.

Yet one of the continuing threads in the mainstream of liberal thought has long been a dedication to the democratic process and to the right of the masses of people to make their voice heard—and heard effectively. If people stop buying a company's goods or services on any large scale—or just make a credible threat to stop—that company's management tends to listen, and listen attentively. But if you think government is anywhere near as responsive, just recall your last encounter with your City Hall, or your maddening correspondence with a government agency.

Government can become so pervasive that it becomes virtually impossible for the citizenry to turn it around and change its course; indeed, ours may already have become so. But it's doubtful that business could ever get so big or so unresponsive, because it is subject to reaction in the marketplace and to public opinion generally, and to legislation that can curb an entire industry overnight.

What should be a tip-off to any thinking liberal is that an anti-business posture, complete with the cliches that too often substitute for thinking, is mandatory in many liberal circles and is not to be subjected to rigorous intellectual examination. It is a knee-jerk reaction, arising largely from conditions that ceased to exist many years ago and to some that never existed at all.

Lionel Trilling wrote: "It has for some time seemed to me that a criticism which has at heart the interest of liberalism might find its most useful work not in confirming liberalism in its sense of self-righteousness but rather in putting under some degree of pressure the liberal ideas and assumptions of the times."(*The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society,* Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976.)

We find puzzling the extent to which liberals often seem impelled to weaken the economic structure on which not just social progress, but indeed our national livelihood depends. To them we suggest the following, oversimplified but nevertheless pointing up the heart of the matter:

Without adequate profits, no businesses.

Without businesses, no jobs.

Without jobs, no social programs.

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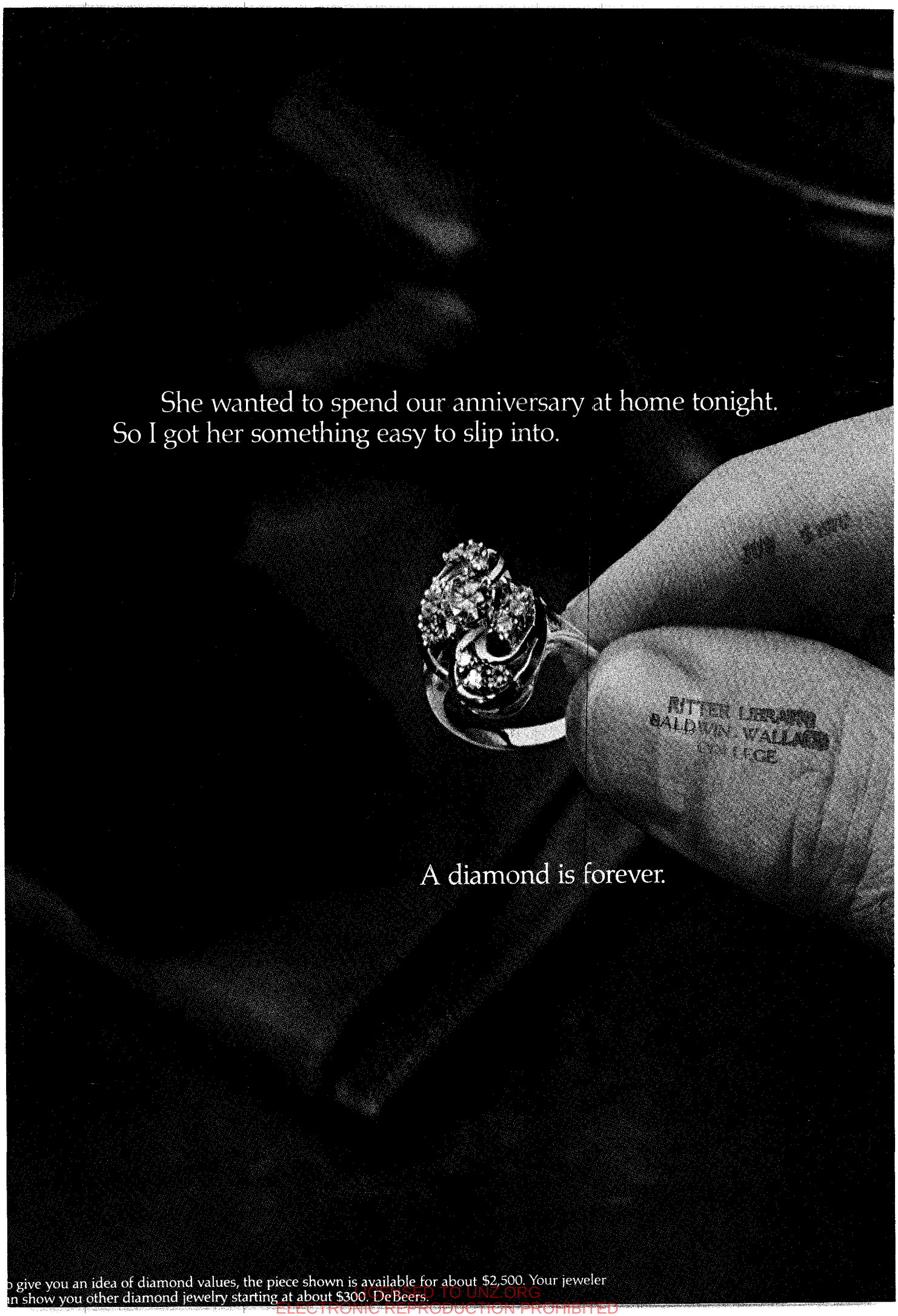

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